

Active frontage design

architecture, affordances and atmospheres

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Abstract

Active frontages are promoted in planning policy as 'best practice'. While acknowledging the importance of public-private interfaces for street-life vitality, this research questions the effectiveness of 'active everywhere' frontage codes requiring extensive areas of transparent glazing, and the associated aversion to all forms of frontage 'blankness'. The conceptual framework for this research is based on affordance theory which offers a pathway for understanding relationships between environment and occupants; looking beyond affordances as opportunities for action, this research also explores sensory affordances, or atmospheres. Through a case study in the Forrest Hill precinct in South Yarra, Melbourne, observed behaviours, and users' sensory perceptions (captured in walk-along video/audio recordings), in relation to built-form outcomes are analysed. Alternative strategies to 'active' transparent frontages are investigated through analysis of global exemplars of non-standard frontage design. The case study research reveals that transparent shopfronts do not always afford the diversity of street-level use, users, and sensory perceptions recognised as impacting on street-life vitality and perceptions of urban quality; and while very long, non-transparent interfaces may be 'deadening', pockets of blankness can contribute to street-life, if part of a mix. The analysis of exemplars of alternative frontage designs identifies key themes for alternative strategies and tactics that may, conceivably, more successfully afford diversity of use, users and sensory experience. These key themes inform a series of design principles that are applied to a 're-imagining' of street-level interfaces in the case study area. Using insights gained from the case study and exemplar research, this research seeks a more critical approach to urban codes impacting frontages i.e. a flexible, 'open' framework that affords innovative strategies, and a broader range of assessment tools to be employed. For urban research, the thesis builds on existing methods for studying frontages by providing a mixed-method, affordance-based analysis framework that could be applied to the investigation of street-level public-private interfaces in other urban areas. For theory, the thesis shows the value of affordance theory as a pathway for analysing existing urban conditions, and for re-imagining alternative scenarios. For urban design, planning, and architecture practice, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the impact of active frontage codes on the street-level public realm and identifies alternative urban design strategies and tactics for street-level interfaces.

Preface

A peer-reviewed paper outlining part of the research covered by this thesis was presented at the 2019 State of Australian Cities (SOAC) Conference, in Perth, Western Australia, in December 2019, and published in the conference proceedings. Specifically, this paper presents data from the Forrest Hill case study (Chapter 6.0 of this thesis), and briefly touches on part of the exemplar analysis (Chapter 7.0 of this thesis). There are also overlaps between the discussions section of the paper and Chapter 8.0 of this thesis.

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Sources for photographs and diagrams

All photographs and diagrams are by the author, unless noted otherwise. For source details for photographs and diagrams by others, refer to the List of Figures.

Declaration

This is to certify that:

01. The thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of MPhil.
02. Due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used.
03. The thesis is fewer than 40,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps/diagrams, bibliographies and appendices.

Jennifer Clare McAllister

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1.0 Introduction



Fig 1.1 Vacant shopfronts, The Nicholson mixed-use development, Nicholson St, Coburg, Melbourne

1.1 Research topic

Since the 1960s, there is a strong focus on the value of promoting and sustaining vital street-life, and the relationship between the design of the street-level public/private interface and street-life intensity (Jacobs 1961/2011; Gehl 1971/2006; Whyte 1980). Active frontages, or edges, are interfaces which allow interaction at the boundary between the public realm of the street and the building interior. In recent times, active frontage codes – often promoting transparent retail shopfronts - have become the ‘default’ requirement of many urban design regulatory controls. While recognising the important role active frontages play, this thesis argues that this approach also has limitations; this is particularly relevant in a time of disruptions to traditional ‘bricks and mortar’ retail, when the synergies of consistent retail frontage are interrupted, and vacant shopfronts proliferate.

As a practicing architect, I have reflected upon these limitations, and the potentially negative consequences for our urban environment resulting from the emergent requirement for ‘active everywhere’ (Six Degrees Urban 2014, p.11). This concern prompted me to step from architect-in-practice to architect-in-research, with the following aims: to offer an enhanced understanding of the effectiveness of current normative active frontage codes and assessment formulas in fostering and supporting a high quality, street-level public realm; and, to raise questions about

the importance of considering alternative – and more creative – urban planning, urban design and architectural strategies and tactics for street level frontages to support, and sustain, interactive and vital street-life.

Focusing on these aims, affordance theory provides a framework for urban research relating to the street-level public/private interface. Affordances are opportunities for action offered by the environment (Gibson 1979/2015). An affordance-based approach offers a multi-scalar tool for evaluating the co-relation between environment and agency. It also provides a non-deterministic strategy for unlocking creative and unconventional opportunities, and looks beyond the physical environment to also encompass emotional sensibilities, via sensory affordances, or ‘atmospheres’.

1.2 Research gaps and questions

The literature review identified gaps in the research concerning active frontages, focusing on the relationship between active frontages and street-life vitality, and the impacts of active frontage codes:

- Existing research into the street level public/private interface has included investigations into the relationship between frontage design and street-life vitality (Gehl 1971/2006, 2010; Whyte 1980; Mehta 2009). However, there has been limited research into the effectiveness of codes promoting transparent ‘active’ frontages in affording street-life vitality, or the investigation of alternative strategies for the design and governance of street-level frontages.
- Further, existing research studying relationships between frontage types and street-level behaviours has focused on central business (or activity) districts, fine-grained residential areas, and neighbourhood commercial strips, with less attention paid to peripheral locations, proximate to (but separate from) main shopping streets, where active frontage codes are often still applied.
- Affordance theory has been widely applied in urban design and architecture theory and practice (Koutamanis 2006; Maier and Fadel 2009; Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014). While there are existing studies using an affordance based approach to analyse public open space, particularly in the field of landscape architecture (Heft 2010; Lennon, Douglas and Scott 2017), there is a gap in the application of affordance theory to the study of the street-level public/private interface. Also, most of the existing affordance-based urban literature relates to research in Europe and North America, not to an Australian urban context.

- Typology classification systems for studying the street-level public/private interface have been developed by Gehl (Gehl, Kaefer and Reigstad 2006), Bobić (2004), and Dovey and Wood (2018). While none of these current interface mapping typologies and evaluation tools are specifically suited to the focus of this inquiry on the effectiveness of active frontage codes in affording street-level vitality, they do provide a platform for developing a research specific method.
- Many studies of the street-level public/private interface employ non-participant observation methods; for example, counting observed behaviours and analysing physical trace evidence (Gehl 2010; Whyte 1980; Mehta 2009). However, there has been limited investigation of the relationships between active frontages and participant users' *perceptions* of spatial quality (Heffernan, Heffernan and Pan 2014). Sensory ethnography offers a pathway for gaining insights into user perceptions of sensory affordances associated with different street-level frontage types and designs. Multi-sensory perceptions have been studied using 'go-along' or 'walk-along' interviews (Kusenbach 2003; Degen and Rose 2012), and researcher-operated video sensory ethnography (Pink 2015). There is an opportunity to adjust current research methods to enable a participant-managed technique for investigating users' sensory affordances associated with different frontage types.

This thesis addresses these research gaps by employing a mix of urban research tools (i.e. morphological and functional-mix mapping, behaviour observation and trace analysis recording and counting, and participant-managed sensory ethnography methods) to study conventional and unconventional affordances associated with different street-level frontage types, to better understand the impacts and effectiveness of active frontage codes on the street-level public/private interface. This affordance-based research framework has been applied to an exploratory case study in the Forrest Hill precinct, an emerging area of higher-density mixed-use development located 3 km south-east of Melbourne's Central Activities District (CAD). This thesis also investigates alternative strategies for the regulation and design of the street-level public/private interface by analysing reference global exemplars of non-standard frontage design.

Returning to the aims of this research, this thesis begins with the question that is fundamental to this study:

'How effective are current active frontage codes in affording an interactive and vital street-life?

Then, this thesis seeks to raise questions about possible alternative strategies for the design and governance of this important socio-spatial interface, by asking:

What street-edge morphology, and/or function, might be more effective than prescribed transparent retail frontages in affording street-life vitality?

and

What urban design strategies and tactics could afford these alternative street-level interfaces?

1.3 Thesis structure

The thesis begins with a literature review, structured in four chapters, surveying the key concerns of street-life vitality, street-level frontages, active frontage codes, and affordances. Chapter 2.0 reviews the literature relating to urban and street-life vitality, the key role of the street in the urban public realm, and links drawn between vitality and perceptions of urban quality. The concept of active frontages is introduced, and the antecedents of the promotion of active frontages as ‘best practice’ outlined, including the development of active frontage policies and codes, using Melbourne as an example. Chapter 3.0 provides context, with an overview of urban literature relating to street-level frontage research, focusing on key themes of frontage typologies, street-level behaviours and experiential qualities relating to frontage types, and frontage re-imagining strategies. Chapter 4.0 introduces the theoretical framework of affordance theory, including sensory affordance (or atmosphere), and its application in urban design, architecture and related fields. An explanation of why an affordance-based approach is a useful conceptual framework for this research is provided, and the ways active frontage codes may restrict or erode affordances supporting diversity (of users, use and sensory experience, linked to street-life vitality) are considered.

Following on from the literature review, the next chapters turn to the research. In Chapter 5.0 the research methodology is presented. Chapter 6.0 analyses the data collected for the selected case study of Forrest Hill to investigate relationships between active frontage codes and affordances supporting vital street-life, to better understand the effectiveness of these codes. Chapter 7.0 examines alternative, non-standard (and more creative) strategies for the street-level public/private interface, and analyses reference global exemplar projects to inform a series of urban design strategies and tactics, and supporting design principles.

Chapter 8.0 concludes the thesis by reflecting on the key findings, including a discussion of how the lessons learnt might be applied in a ‘re-imagining’ of street-level frontages within the case study precinct, and beyond. The implications for urban design and architecture theory and practice are also discussed, and recommendations made for further research.

1.4 Contribution

For urban design and architecture theory, the thesis shows the value of affordance theory as a conceptual framework for analysing existing urban conditions, to better understand the potential impacts of current planning codes on street-level interfaces and street-life vitality, and for re-imagining alternative scenarios. For urban research, the thesis builds on existing methods for studying frontages by providing a mixed-method, affordance-based analysis framework that could be applied to the investigation of street-level public-private interfaces in other urban areas.

For urban design, planning, and architecture practice, the thesis contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the impact of active frontage codes on the street-level public realm. The findings show that transparent shopfronts do not always afford the diversity of street-level use, users, and sensory perceptions recognised as impacting on street-life vitality and perceptions of urban quality; and while very long, non-transparent interfaces may be ‘deadening’, pockets of blankness can contribute to street-life, if part of a mix. Alternative urban design strategies and tactics for street-level interfaces, that may more effectively maximise affordances supporting diversity than prescribed transparency, are identified. Finally, the thesis breaks down barriers between research and practice by demonstrating the value of targeted and systematic urban research, underpinned by theory, as a means to strengthen practice.

2.0 Vital street-life and active frontages



Fig 2.1 Vital street-life, Centre Place, Melbourne

A starting point for this research is to understand the concept of a *vital street-life*, why it is considered to be important, and what urban elements, such as active frontages, may contribute to street-life vitality. Specifically, this research seeks to understand the impacts of active frontage codes on street-life, as articulated in the first research question:

How effective are current active frontage codes in affording an interactive and vital street-life?

As a prelude for this inquiry, this chapter provides a brief overview of what is meant by street-life vitality, followed by an introduction to the concept of active frontages, and the antecedents of the promotion of transparent 'active' frontages as 'best practice'. The final section outlines the development of active frontage policies and codes, using Melbourne as an example.

2.1 Vital street-life

The definition of vital contains two key elements: *absolutely necessary, essential, indispensable to the continuation of life*; and, *full of energy, lively* (Oxford Dictionary of English 2015^A). For Lynch, exploring what makes a 'good' city, a vital city supports human life, health and function; that is, a vital place has characteristics which make it an 'adequate life ground'. Lynch (1984, pp.121-

122) identified these characteristics as *sustenance* (a sufficient supply of air, water, and food; and the removal of waste); *safety* (a physically secure environment, safe from natural disaster, attack, disease, and pollution); and *consonance* (the 'fit' between the environment and human biology).

In addition to investigating the role of the vital city in supporting the *physical* survival of the human species, urban research seeks to understand urban *life* i.e. the ways in which we engage with our urban environment and other members of society. The shared urban life of the city is experienced in the public realm; those places 'where strangers meet' (Sennett 2018, p.586)¹. While not restricting the boundaries of the public 'sphere' to the physical realm, Habermas (1991) argues that freedom of communication within the public realm between those from differing backgrounds (ethnic, gender, and class) can foster an increased empathy for the interests of others, beyond ones' own self-interest. As well as engendering tolerance for difference (Sennett 1971; Lofland 1998), interactive communication between strangers allows the exchange of ideas and opinions, including conflicts of interest and dissent. It is this exchange between strangers, when (in an ideal world) everyone is an equal participant, that underlies freedom of expression and democracy (Mitchell 1996).

Lefebvre (1996) conceptualised equitable spatial and social relationships within the public realm as the 'right to the city', where equal 'rights' of participation in (i.e. the production of), and appropriation (i.e. full and complete usage) of public space are important for full citizenship². In reality, equal 'rights' to the public realm for all urban citizens is complicated by competing desires and objectives. As Dovey (2016, p.14) observes, 'The 'right to the city' means that the design, use and meaning of public space is always in contention'.

Sennett's (2018, p.585) succinct, but nuanced, definition of the 'ideal' city draws together the threads of urban vitality i.e. urban survival and urban life:

'The cities that everyone wants to live in would be clean and safe, possess efficient public services, support a dynamic economy, provide cultural stimulation, and help heal society's divisions of race, class and ethnicity'.

The physical public realm, where urban life is realised, includes openly accessible spaces such as public streets, plazas, squares, parks, and beaches. Additional sub-categories of the public realm include *public enclaves*: publicly owned space that is only accessible to those who pay or qualify to use it (e.g. café dining on the public footpath/sidewalk, theatres, and stadiums); and

¹ Although the public realm has now expanded into digital 'cyber-space', this research is concerned with the *physical* urban public realm.

² Where citizenship is not defined by nationality or political borders, but is linked to the privileges and responsibilities of a particular group or society.

quasi-public space: privately owned and controlled but publicly accessible (e.g. shopping malls and corporate plazas) (Dovey 2016, p.155). But while all forms of public space may contribute to urban vitality, the principal element of the urban public realm (commonly constituting the largest area of public space, most often occupied, and linking all other elements together) is the street. Whyte (1988/2009, p.7) recognised the primacy of the public street:

‘It is the river of life of the city, the place where we come together, the pathway to the centre. It is the primary place; [...] it has much to teach us’.

The integral part equitable access to the public realm plays in supporting citizenship and democracy has been noted; as a fundamental component of the public realm, streets are, therefore, important public forums for democratic debate, dissent and disruption. Streets also provide ‘arenas’ for public gatherings for mourning, commemoration and celebration. Although often formalised, sanctioned, and commercialised, these public expressions of emotion ‘still provide opportunities to forge and assert a collective identity, claim rights to equal citizenship and display pride’ (Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht 2009, p.79).

In addition to providing opportunities for ‘face to face’ contact between strangers, the importance of the street as a social space for local communities is recognised, and supported, by those who believe that ‘liveable neighbourhoods cannot be anonymous’ but require ‘everyday interactions’ (Harding and Blockland 2014, p.179). This is Lofland’s (1998, p.9) ‘parochial realm’, where there is a sense of commonality among acquaintances and neighbours in inter-personal networks. In her seminal work, *Death and life of great American cities*, Jacobs (1961/2011, p.37) advocated for the key role of the streets and their footpaths/sidewalks - ‘the most vital organs’ of the city - in building and nurturing communities. For Jacobs (ibid., p.193), it is the daily rituals of urban life (‘street ballet’) that provide street-life vitality. Jacobs identified several prerequisites for vitality, including density i.e. a concentration of both people and activities.

Whyte (1988/2009, p.6) concurred with Jacobs that density, and concentration, of people on the streets is essential for street-life vitality, observing that if pedestrian flows in a city centre are less than 1000 per hour, ‘there are simply not enough people [...] to make lively life on its streets’. For Gehl (2010, p.71), vitality is not just a product of ‘how many’ people are on the streets; another significant factor is ‘how long’ they linger and engage in stationary activities i.e. people attract people, providing more opportunities for interaction. In his studies of stationary and lingering activities in public spaces, Whyte (1980, p.94) observed the effect of an ‘external stimulus that promotes strangers to talk to each other as though they were not’, coining the term ‘triangulation’ to explain this phenomenon.

Jacobs (1961/2011) also stressed the importance of overlapping activities and the need to spread people on the streets beyond the daily commuting and lunch-time peak hours. That said, vital street-life need not be *constantly* 'active', 'lively' or 'diverting' (in either the physical or sensory realms); a vital street-life may offer a diversity of urban-life experiences, including opportunities for being alone in public, and for passive interaction (Whyte 1980; Mehta 2019). These moments of relief, juxtaposed with periods of intensity, are the elements of 'silence' and 'sound' within urban rhythms.

For Jacobs another key prerequisite for vitality is diversity, of both use and users. In the urban public realm, perceptions of street-level vitality are often linked to economic activity (Montgomery 1998, p.98). While Jacobs (1961/2011, p.193) does stress the importance of 'fine-grain economic diversity', her definition of diversity also included 'a variety of cultural opportunities, variety of scenes, and a great variety in its population and other users'. Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht (2012) also identify the important contribution that cultural and social diversity (e.g. ethnicity/race, gender, sexuality, age, differing abilities, social class, political ideology, habitation) make to the variety, and intensity, of street-level activities and interactions.

As well as density and diversity of street-level use and users, regulations and cultural factors impact street-life vitality. For example, in some societies there is a cultural predilection for shops that spill out onto the street, and self-organisation and little regulation 'can create shops and other uses based on demand' (Nycolaas and Troina 2016, p.119). Other cultures, including Australia, take a more formal approach, regulating and controlling ground-floor building uses, and placing restrictions on footpath and informal trading.

Links are made between street-life vitality and perceptions of urban quality. Montgomery (1998, p.96) theorises that successful urban places combine quality in 'three essential elements: physical space, the sensory experience, and activity', where activity is the product of what Montgomery deemed to be the separate, but related, concepts of 'vitality and diversity'.

In addition to social capital, an 'active' and 'lively' street-life may produce symbolic capital, to be appropriated for the promotion of a street or neighbourhood as a tourist and leisure 'destination'. As Judd (1995/2011, p.266) observes, the diversity of urban areas can be converted into sanctioned 'diversion districts', which (to succeed) must attempt to 'convey, simultaneously, an ambience of security and fun'. When vital streets are sanitised, or turned into 'theme parks for consumption' (Sorkin 1992), they may continue to support densities of people and interactions; however, as with the process of gentrification, they may lose the diversity which was a generator of their original 'attraction'.

In sum, street-life vitality may be linked to perceptions of liveliness, community, and urban quality. Vitality is not solely a product of co-presence (or 'busy-ness'); the diversity of use and users, and the complexity of social interactions (both formal and non-structured), are also important.

2.2 Active frontages

While street-life vitality has been linked to a number of social factors, including the density, diversity and complexity of interactions, attention has also been paid to understanding what physical urban elements and qualities may contribute to street-life vitality. For example, in addition to a mix of primary uses and a concentration of people, Jacobs (1961/2011) also identified short blocks (to provide a variety of pedestrian route options), and a fine-grain mix of buildings of varying age and condition (to allow occupation by a diversity of socio-economic groups) as key prerequisites for vitality.

Other context specific morphological and environmental factors may impact on street-level vitality and perceptions of urban quality i.e. the width of streets and footpaths relative to pedestrian densities and flows; buffers between pedestrians and vehicular traffic; the location and design of street furniture and services; and climatic mediators including building canopies, street trees and other forms of 'soft' landscaping (Mehta 2009). In another example, Appleyard (1981), found links between the volume of traffic in streets and the type and intensity of neighbourhood social interactions.

Another focal point for understanding links between urban elements and street-life vitality is the relationship between the design of the street level public/private interface and street-life intensity. Active frontages, or edges, are those public/private interfaces which allow social interaction at the boundary between the public realm of the street and the building interior. This interaction may be provided via a visual connection, as observed by Alexander (1977, p.774):

'The sight of action is an incentive for action. When people can see into spaces from the street their world is enlarged and made richer, there is more understanding; and there is the possibility for communication, learning'.

Jacobs (1961/2011, p.45) also promoted the importance of visual connections, coining the phrase 'eyes on the street' for passive surveillance as a means of supporting vitality by improving public safety i.e. neighbourhood surveillance of public space making it safer, leading to more people on the streets, making it still safer:

'[...] there must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street. [...] the sidewalk must have users on it fairly continuously, both to add to the number of effective eyes on the street and to induce the people in buildings along the street to watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers'.

The 'eyes on the street' principle remains influential in contemporary urban planning and design, underpinning current active frontage policies that require extensive transparent glazing to street-level frontages, with 'natural surveillance' having been adopted as a core principle of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) (Cozens and Love 2015).

Some urban scholars propose that physical connections are as important as visual linkages in activating frontages. Alexander (1977, p.774) noted that 'a glass connection creates a relatively passive involvement' and argued that an opening in a wall 'creates a far more valuable and involving connection'. Gehl (2010) concurs, identifying the activity that occurs with people entering and leaving buildings, and recommending short distances between entrances as a means for activating street-life. Referencing ecology, Sennett (2011, p.326) observes that a porous street-wall creates a 'living border' i.e. a zone of interaction between different species (or users); whereas a non-porous wall, or 'boundary', excludes diversity and exchange.

Other sensory modalities (olfactory, auditory, tactile, kinetic) are given less prominence in frontage activation discourse than visual connections and physical interactions, but do receive some attention. For example, Alexander (1977, p.774) identifies the role of sound and smell in interactions at the public/private interface:

'When the wall is open it is possible to hear what is going on inside, to smell the inside, to exchange words, and even to step in all along the opening'.

Gehl, Kaefer and Reigstad (2006, p.32) also identify the important role of 'smell, touch, and taste' in the sensory experience of the 'close-encounter architecture' of street-level frontages.

In addition to promoting façade transparency and permeability to intensify street-life, early interface analyses also sought the elimination of blank frontages. Whyte devoted a chapter in *City: rediscovering the city centre* to the proposition that blank walls are 'bad for the city' (1988/2009, Chapter 15: Blank Walls), and advocated for retail at street level:

'They [blank walls] have a message. They are a declaration of distrust of the city and its streets and the undesirables who might be on them' (ibid., p.222).

'The best thing to do with blank walls is to do away with them, or, at the very least, replace them with something – most particularly street-level retail' (ibid., p.226).

Whyte's criticism was directed at a phenomenon he observed to be a 'dominant feature' of the contemporary city i.e. institutions and shopping malls 'turning their back' on the public realm, with extensive lengths of blank wall a manifestation of the privatisation and internalisation of public life. Although a legitimate reaction against the resulting loss of interaction between the public and private realms, this thesis argues that Whyte's 'anti-blank wall' message has

subsequently been reduced within contemporary street-level frontage policy to an aversion to permitting façade ‘blankness’ in any form.

To recap, active frontages are identified as one possible strategy to afford social interactions at the street-level public/private interface, with emphasis placed on maximising facade transparency and visual connections, and minimising blank walls. Facade porosity, including the number and spacing of building entrances, is also linked to activities providing opportunities for social interaction, and for sensory connections between the street and the building interior.

2.3 Active frontage codes

Planning policies and codes promoting active frontages as ‘best practice’ have been widely adopted in many countries, including Australia. Briefly, codes are tools of urban design governance, used to realise the desired outcomes of planning policy by controlling and/or guiding land-use and/or built-form outcomes. Carmona (2017) identifies two fundamental types of codes, or control processes i.e. prescriptive (or mandatory) codes based on a *fixed* legal framework, and *discretionary* codes (which may be supported by design guidelines and/or performance standards). Both approaches have perceived limitations i.e. prescriptive codes may be seen as ‘rigid’ and ‘inflexible’, constraining non-standard ideas and solutions; whereas discretionary codes are open to interpretation and may, therefore, be deemed ‘arbitrary’ or ‘subjective’, leading to inconsistent decision making (ibid., p.14). That said, *both* fixed and discretionary urban design codes require informed decision making; as Carmona, Marshall and Stevens (2006, p. 278) observe: ‘[design] codes are only as good as the designers who design them and the regulators who implement them’.

In Melbourne, the early adoption of active frontage policy was influenced by the work of Danish architect and urbanist Jan Gehl who is ‘an international champion of active frontages’ (Jones 2018, p.116). By the 1980s the central area of Melbourne, like many other cities, was suffering the effects of residential depopulation and the loss of retail to suburban shopping malls, while the development of large scale consolidated-lot developments, such as Collins Place (1981), eroded the city’s fine-grain scale and created poor quality street-level interfaces.

Following the 1989 economic and property crash, the State Government of Victoria and the City of Melbourne collaborated on initiatives to rejuvenate the central city. These included *Postcode 3000*, launched in 1992, which aimed to create a ‘24-hour city’ by increasing the number of inner-city residential housing units from 600 to 3000 by the year 2000 (City of Melbourne 1993). Another joint enterprise was *Creating prosperity: Victoria’s capital city policy* which had the goal of achieving a ‘more liveable and vibrant city’, with a focus on ‘enhancing Melbourne’s national

and international profile, its role and competitiveness' (State Government of Victoria with the City of Melbourne 1994).

An initiative actioned under the *Creating prosperity* policy brought Gehl to Melbourne to work with the City of Melbourne's Urban Design Manager, Rob Adams (who later became Director of City Design). Building on earlier public-life studies conducted in Copenhagen, Stockholm and Perth (Australia), Gehl Architects (in collaboration with City of Melbourne urban design and planning staff) surveyed and examined the quantity and quality of public space activity in the central city area of Melbourne (Gehl Architects with the City of Melbourne 1994).

The outcome of the 1994 *Places for People* study was a series of recommendations and benchmarks for urban design strategies to improve street-life vitality. These strategies included 'removing large areas of blank and uninviting walls,' and promoting 'ground-level building facades that provide interest through windows, displays and visible indoor activity' on the premise that facades that were 'stimulating' would encourage people to walk through, and stay longer, in the city. A ground-floor frontage evaluation scale graded frontages from A Quality (active, open, 'soft', more than 25 doors per 100m, large variety of functions) through to E Quality (inactive, passive, closed, 'hard', 0 - 2 premises per 100m, no visible variation in function) (figure 2.2). The proposition was that A and B Quality frontages 'maintain a healthy street life', C and D 'allow street life to survive', while E Quality frontages 'kill street-life' (ibid., pp.32-33).³

Melbourne City Council supported the recommendations of the 1994 report, including the adoption of an active edges policy for the Central Activities District (CAD). In 2004, Gehl Architects were invited to return to Melbourne to update the study and review progress against the 1994 benchmarks. The 2004 report provides a summary of the framework for the City's active edges policy (Gehl Architects with the City of Melbourne 2005, p.20):

- Shops and food service outlets must have a display window or entrance measuring at least 5metres or 80 percent of the ground-floor façade (whichever is the larger).
- The rhythm, scale, architectural detail, windows and colours of new facades must be in keeping with existing street space.

³ Gehl (2005, p.20) also employs a 3-part variation of this scale, i.e.

'A' grade facades offer two-way visual permeability at street level. The activities occurring within these buildings add a sense of life and diversity to the streetscape;

'B' grade facades provide some visual access to the interior, but it is obscured by displays, signage or the scale and type of glazing; and

'C' grade frontages which have a poor street interface due to poor or no visibility, such as tinted one-way glazing, windows raised above pedestrian level, solid walls ,or absence of ground floor occupation'.




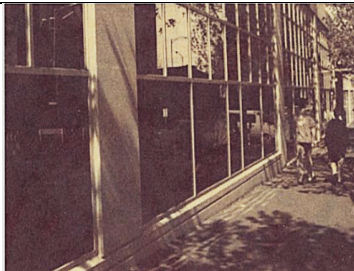

<p>A quality frontages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than fifteen premises every 100 metres • More than twenty-five doors and windows every 100 metres • A large range of functions • No blind facades and few passive ones • Much depth and relief in the building surface • High quality materials and refined details 	
<p>B quality frontages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten to fourteen premises every 100 metres • More than fifteen doors and windows every 100 metres • A moderate range of functions • A few blind or passive facades • Some depth and modelling in the building surface • Good quality materials and refined details 	
<p>C quality frontages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six to ten premises every 100 metres • Some range of functions • Less than half blind or passive facades • Very little depth and modelling in the building surface • Standard materials and few details 	
<p>D quality frontages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three to five premises every 100 metres • Little or no range of functions • Predominantly blind or passive facades • Flat building surfaces • Few or no details 	
<p>E quality frontages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to two premises every 100 metres • No range of functions • Predominantly blind or passive facades • Flat building surfaces • No details and nothing to look at 	

Fig 2.2 Ground floor frontage evaluation scale
Source: Gehl Architects with the City of Melbourne 1994

- Buildings must provide details of interest to pedestrians and use high quality, durable materials.
- Facades must not be devoid of detail; large facades in particular must be divided into smaller sections for articulation.
- Signs must be adapted to building designs.
- Windows must be glazed with clear glass; façade design must provide good lighting at night for additional security.
- Roller shutter doors are to be removed and replaced with visually permeable or transparent shopfront security screens mounted internally.

The definition of what constitutes an active frontage varies within planning literature. For example, the State Government of Victoria Planning Authority (VPA) glossary of its ‘interpretation of commonly used planning terms’ includes the following definition of active frontage (Victorian Planning Authority 2021):

‘Building frontage which contains uses which promote activity and interaction with the street. For example, cafes’.

A more comprehensive, and nuanced, definition of active frontages is provided in the State Government Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria (State Government of Victoria 2017, p.6):

‘[Active frontages] refers to street frontages where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground and upper floors of buildings. This quality is assisted where the front facade of buildings, including the main entrance, faces and opens towards the street. Ground floors may accommodate uses such as cafes, shops or restaurants. However, for a frontage to be active, it does not necessarily need to be a retail⁴ use, nor have continuous windows. A building’s upper floor windows and balconies may also contribute to the level of active frontage. Active frontages can provide informal surveillance opportunities and often improve the vitality and safety of an area. The measures of active frontage may be graded from high to low activity’.

Active frontage policies have been adopted by local governments areas (LGAs) within the Melbourne metropolitan area, and in the larger regional urban centres throughout the State of Victoria. Some of the planning codes applied in support of these policies are prescriptive controls; others take the form of discretionary performance guidelines. The detailed requirements of active frontage codes vary; however, many LGAs have followed the lead of the City of Melbourne’s active edges policy by nominating a length or percentage of the street-level frontage to be ‘entry or clear transparent display window to a shop and/or food and drink premises or customer service areas’⁵.

⁴ In the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP), in addition to shops the retail land-use term includes (amongst others) food and beverage premises, gambling premises, manufacturing sales, and postal agencies (State Government of Victoria 2019).

⁵ For example, the *Port Phillip Planning Scheme Clause 21: Built Form* nominates activation of ground-floor frontages as follows: Retail areas, predominantly clear glazing from footpath level to a height of 2 metres with pedestrian entries at least every 15 metres (every 6 to 10 metres within the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area); Commercial and mixed use areas, through at least 50% clear glazing between a height of 1 metre and 2 metres above footpath level with pedestrian entries at least every 30 metres (every 10 to 25 metres within the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area) (City of Port Phillip, 2018).

In 2018, the City of Melbourne released the draft Central Melbourne Design Guide (City of Melbourne 2018⁶) which, in addition to covering urban structure, site layout, building mass, and building program, expands on the original active edges policy and provides guidelines for the design of the public interfaces at street-level, and for the first 20-metres of building height (figure 2.3). In addition to requirements for clear display windows or entries⁷, the maximum percentage of frontage to be occupied by building services is restricted, and façade details such as integrated seating (where footpaths are too narrow for on-street dining) and canopies which allow upwards views, are promoted.

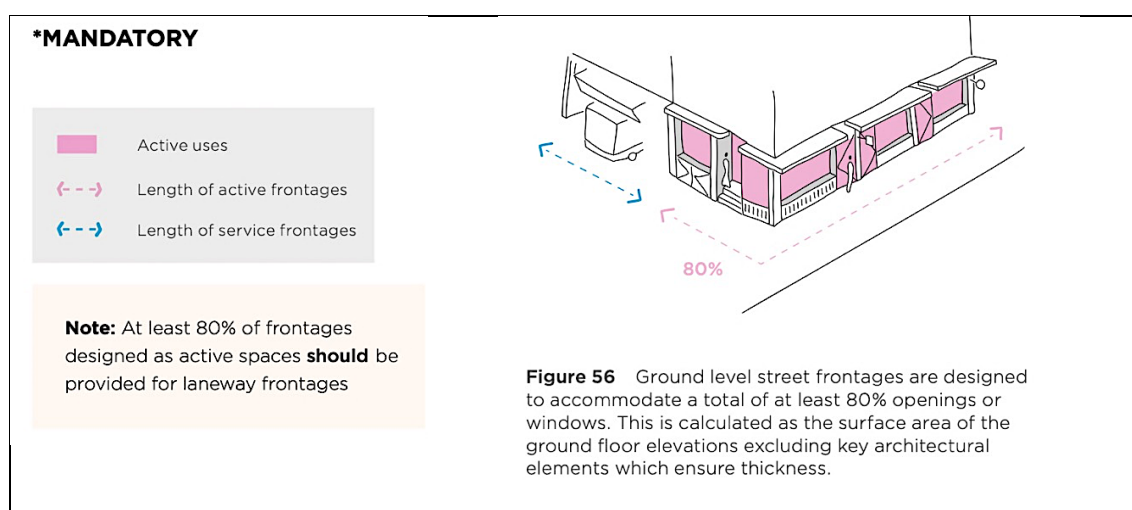


Fig 2.3 Active frontage requirements for Special Character Areas in central Melbourne

Source: City of Melbourne 2018, *Draft Central Melbourne Design Guide*.

The Central Melbourne Design Guide (ibid., p.86) also provides design guidelines for achieving design quality, including encouraging the use of ‘natural, tactile and visually interesting materials at the lower levels near the public interface to reinforce a human scale’. It might be anticipated that the Melbourne Design Guide will influence codes for street-level public/private interfaces in other municipalities.

2.4 Conclusions

The literature review in this chapter has discussed the important contribution of interactions in the public realm (between strangers, and within communities) in supporting democracy and self-expression; the primacy of the public street as a site for interaction; the key themes of concentration, complexity, and diversity of social interactions in relation to street-life vitality; and links between street-life vitality and perceptions of urban quality. In addition to social interactions,

⁶ The Central Melbourne Design Guide is an incorporated document in the proposed C308 Amendment to the Melbourne Planning Scheme. In November 2019 the amendment was endorsed by Melbourne City Council; at the time of writing (November 2020) final approval has not yet been issued by the Minister of Planning for incorporation of the amendment into the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

⁷ The requirement for 80% of frontage to be entry or clear glazed window is proposed as mandatory in designated Special Character Areas, and recommended in General Development Areas.

street-life vitality is linked to a range of spatial factors and urban elements, and the promotion of transparent 'active' frontages to generate interactions at the street-level frontage is just one possible strategy for affording a vital street-life.

The focus on replacing blank facades with active frontages, and the adoption of active frontage codes as 'best practice', originally arose as a legitimate reaction against a loss of interaction at the street-level interface between the private realm of the building interior and the public realm of the street. In addition to aspiring to 'lively' streets, key drivers motivating the adoption of active frontage policy – demonstrated by the Melbourne example - included the objectives of improved public safety and economic activity i.e. encouraging people to come into the central city areas and stay longer, and to spend more money while they were there. From these antecedents, it can be argued the elimination of facade blankness in any form has now become a 'default' position within frontage governance and assessment. This thesis queries whether there been any critical review of how *effective* active frontage codes, requiring extensive facade transparency, are in fostering and supporting the street-life vitality, and associated social benefits, that they aim to achieve.

To move forward with this inquiry, the next chapter reviews existing urban literature relating to street-level frontages, to gain an understanding of relevant existing scholarship, and to establish a conceptual framework for these investigations.

3.0 Street-level frontages

Chapter 2.0 discussed the important role street-life vitality plays in urban life, and the rise of the promotion of active frontages as an instrument to support vital street-life. This chapter provides an overview of urban literature relating to street-level frontage research, focussing on key themes of frontage typologies, behaviours and experiential qualities relating to frontage types, and frontage re-imagining strategies. The purpose of this review is to establish context, and to inform a methodological approach for this research.

3.1 Literature

A review of urban literature relating to street-level frontages/interfaces shows that existing inquiry and analysis can be grouped into several categories, including:

Frontage evaluation and typologies

- types for analysis and mapping (Gehl, Kaefer and Reigstad 2006; Bobić 2004; Dovey and Wood 2018)
- socio-spatial evaluations of street-level interface types (Gehl 1971/2006, 2010; Gehl and Svarre 2013; Thwaites, Simpson and Simkins 2020)

Behaviours relating to frontage types

- relationships between frontage design and street-level behaviours (Gehl 1971/2006, 2010; Whyte 1980; Gehl and Svarre 2013; Mehta 2009; Dovey and Symons 2014; Hassan, Moustafa and El-Fiki 2019)
- safety/natural surveillance (Jacobs 1961/2011; Newman 1973)

Experiential qualities of street-level public space, including frontages

- impact of frontage design on perceptions of urban quality (Heffernan, Heffernan and Pan 2014; Spanjar and Suurenbroek 2020)
- multi-sensory experiential qualities (Lucas and Romice 2010; Mehta 2014; Zamanifard, Alizadeh and Coiacetto 2018; Palipane 2019)

Re-imagining frontages

- strategies for re-imagining frontages (Dovey and Symons 2014; Thwaites, Simpson and Simkins 2020)

Forces behind frontage activation and de-activation

- economic, regulatory, and cultural forces behind frontage activation and de-activation (Kickert 2016; Maccreanor Lavington et al. 2016; Moore 2017)

While the last category is important to understanding the range of influencing factors impacting on street-level frontages and street-life vitality, including economic and real-estate market forces, this area of inquiry is beyond the scope of this research. This thesis has an urban design and architecture focus, and is concerned with relationships between frontage types and street-level behaviours and experiential qualities; therefore the following research themes are identified as being relevant and useful:

- frontage typologies, as a tool for mapping and analysis
- behaviours and experiential qualities relating to frontages, to understand relationships between frontage types and street-life vitality
- re-imagining frontages, as providing a pathway for testing alternative strategies and tactics

3.2 Frontage typologies

An important line of inquiry is the development of interface typologies as a tool for mapping and analysis of street-level frontages. Mapping and analysis of street-level function and morphology is a core urban design research approach for understanding spatial and social interrelationships; however, as Dovey (2016, p.68) observes, the mapping of street-level frontages has received less attention:

‘The mapping of functions, permeability, walkability, grain size and density together with analysis of their interrelations are now stock in trade for urban design analysis; interfaces need to be added to that list.’

Urban researchers who have developed frontage, or interface, mapping, assessment and classification techniques include Gehl (see section 2.3), whose evaluation scale grades frontages from A to E (Gehl Architects with City of Melbourne 1994). Gehl’s evaluation scale provides a valuable framework for comparative analysis of public/private urban interfaces; however, this approach has limitations. Dovey (2016, p.59) asserts that Gehl’s methodology is normative and ‘geared primarily to diagnose and eliminate blank, passive and antisocial facades in favour of active edges’.

Bobić developed a methodology for mapping and analysing the spatial forms of the interstitial zone between the building and the street, proposing that this interface can be seen as a ‘small scale core of urbanity’ (2004, p.8). Bobić aligns with Gehl in promoting the important role of the physical transition zone, or entrance point, as providing the key contact zone, and the importance of socio-spatial complexity at the street-level interface. However Bobić (ibid., p.41) queries whether this complexity can be designed, suggesting that complexity requires ‘design and planning restraint’.

Bobić's (ibid., pp.86-126) 7-part interface typology (with 40 sub-types) concentrates on transition spaces and entrances, referencing both the morphology of the transition zone and the extent of territorial claims by one realm over the other. For example, in *Type B: Overlapped* the public and private realms are overlaid onto each other (e.g. a front door recessed in an alcove); whereas in *Type D: Associated* an element (such as the Amsterdam 'stoop') projects beyond the building line and requires that the public and private realms co-exist both spatially and socially. Bobić's classification also includes 26 additional architecture and landscape interface detail sub-types (AF and LF types) which, Bobić (ibid., pp.127-137) explains, influence the form and character of the interface.

While providing a useful tool for considering the 'territorial skirmishes' necessary for nurturing urbanity (Sennett 1971), the Bobić typology has limitations. For example, it focuses primarily on entrances, and pays little attention to forms of blankness or impermeability. In addition, although facade transparency is referenced as a means of visually connecting the building interior and street-life (ibid., p.131), windows are not specifically covered in the 40 sub-types (although they are touched on in architectural detail features *AF.7 Bay Window* and *AF.8 Large Street window*). Further, although Bobić recognises that the complexity and meaning of public/private interfaces are impacted upon by the agencies of culture and time, specifically through 'incremental transformations' (ibid., p.140), this key insight is not reflected in his typology. Finally, the large number of types and associated sub-types mean that, as Dovey and Wood (2018, p.146) observe, it would be difficult to use the Bobić typology as an on-site mapping tool.

More recently, Dovey and Wood (2015, 2018) have examined the public/private interface through a lens of Assemblage Theory, based on the work of French philosophers, Deleuze and Guattari (1988) and developed by DeLanda (2006). Briefly, Dovey (2016, p.263) explains this thinking in relation to the city by considering the urban condition as an assemblage – a socio-spatial cluster formed by interconnectivity, flows, alliances, and synergies between its parts, and where the identity and functions of both the wholes and the parts emerge from these relationships. Dovey elaborates that an assemblage is not merely a set of parts organised to work together in a particular way; an assemblage also claims a territory (space) and expresses identity (social). Dovey (ibid., p.264) uses the street as illustration, explaining that the street is not simply a collection of buildings, people, rules, goods etc.; it is the interconnections that are crucial.

'An assemblage is dynamic – it is the flows of life, traffic, goods and money that give the street its intensity and its emergent sense of place. From this view, all cities and parts of cities are assemblages.'

From their investigation of the socio-spatial assemblage of the street-level public/private interface, Dovey and Wood (2018, p.148) identify the key variables as permeability, transparency,

setback/transition, and car-dependency. From this base they have developed, and extensively tested, a 5-part interface typology: impermeable/blank, direct/opaque, direct/transparent, pedestrian transition, and car transition (figure 3.1). Dovey and Wood argue that, unlike Gehl's continuum from 'active' to 'blank', their classification recognises 'the ambiguities and complexities that mediate interaction between public and private space' (Dovey 2016, p.61). A key focus of this approach is the complex dynamics of adaptation and transformation from one type to another; public/private interface assemblages are always on a continuum between stasis ('being') and change ('becoming'), where the potential for adaptation and transformation is their 'becoming' nature.

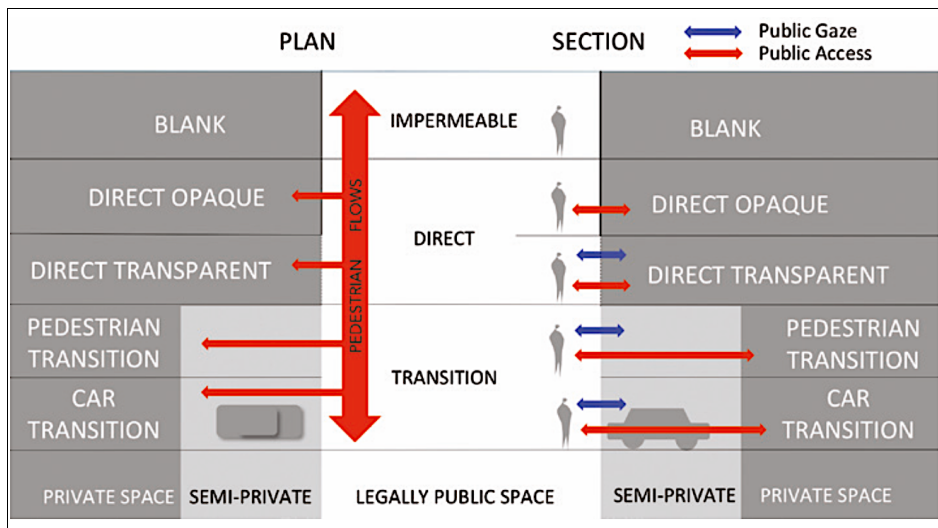


Figure 3.1 Dovey/Wood five interface types
Source: Dovey and Wood 2018

Although not strictly a *typology*, Thwaites, Simpson and Simkins (2020) have developed an assessment framework that is similar to Gehl's approach in that it qualitatively evaluates and rates frontages. The Thwaites/Simpson/Simkins (ibid., p.295) approach, like Dovey/Wood's, investigates the street-level public/private interface through a lens of assemblage theory, defining their conceptual framework (the *transitional edge*), as 'assemblages of territorialised segments'. Streets are analysed to identify 'segments', which are then rated on a scale from one (weak) to five (strong) against ten determinants which collectively define specific socio/spatial attributes i.e. enclosure, looseness, public/private gradient, spatial overlap of realms, permeability, transparency, capacity to encourage stationary activity, social interaction across realms, hide and reveal (i.e. ability to control private retreat or social interaction), and capacity to appropriate/personalise territory. The results for contiguous segments are overlaid to identify which segments fall below identified evaluation thresholds and vary significantly from the 'overall consistency' of the edge, to determine which segments require adjustment (figure 3.2).

The transitional edge evaluation approach is potentially useful for identifying declining premises within existing fine-grained, relatively consistent local neighbourhood shopping strips, and for providing strategies for revitalisation. As the authors (ibid., p.8) propose, this method may also have value in supporting small-scale, locally managed forms of intervention, and in ‘challenging the dominance of form based levels of control’. However, the transitional edge framework method may be less effective when applied to other urban edge settings; for example, it may be less applicable to car-dominated street-level frontages, or those with a large grain-size and lack of diversity, where it would be difficult to find variations in the overall consistency of the street-level interface, because few such variations exist.

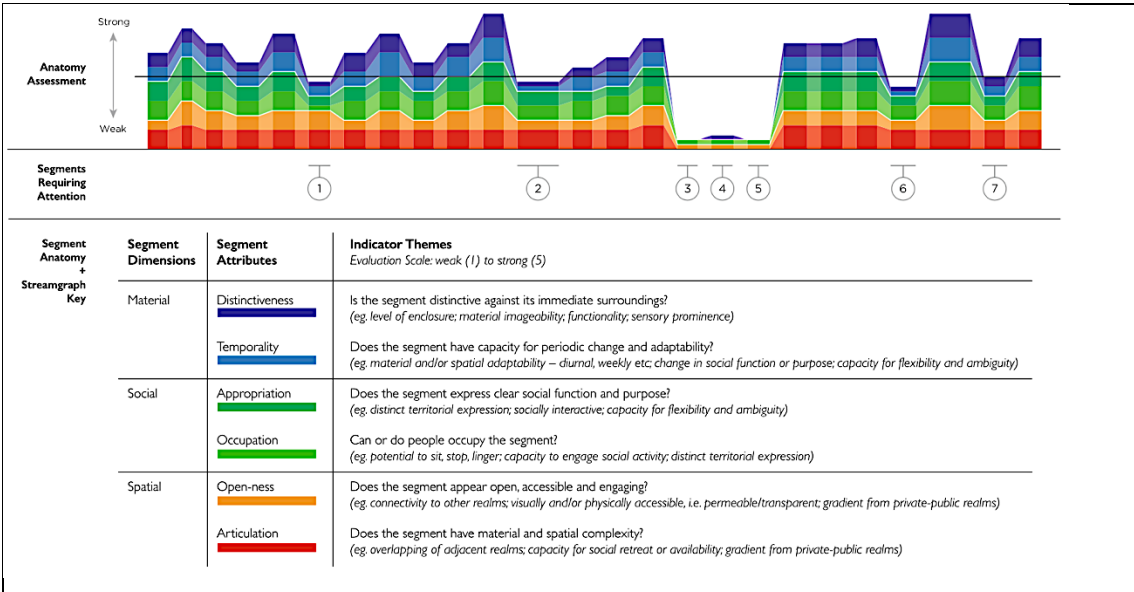


Figure 3.2 Thwaites/Simpson/Simkins transitional edge evaluation method
Source: Thwaites, Simpson and Simkins 2020

To recapitulate, the Bobić typology does not specifically address the key variables of transparency and blankness which are of relevance to this inquiry. The Gehl evaluation scale *does* focus on these variables, and provides a valuable, ‘user-friendly’ tool for analysis and comparison of frontages; however, it assumes that transparency is ‘good’ and all blankness ‘undesirable’, and, by nominating formulas (for glazing areas, numbers of entries etc.), it is a normative approach that focusses on ‘should be’, not what ‘might be’. The Thwaites/Simpson/Simkins transitional edge evaluation method also considers transparency and permeability, and is more multi-dimensional than the Gehl scale, but – by seeking to create ‘consistency’ across a frontage – it is also a normative approach. The Dovey/Wood typology, looking at the more nuanced interconnections at the public/private interface and recognising the role of interface adaptability in enabling (rather than determining), provides a useful tool for mapping and analysis that can be adapted to specifically suit this research.

3.3 Behaviours

The link between the built-form of street-level frontages and street-level behaviours is now mainstream knowledge in urban design theory and practice, and a variety of urban research methods have been developed to study these behaviours. For example, counting pedestrian numbers is a tool used to quantify pedestrian flows and rhythms. However, although this method does provide useful comparative data about pedestrian density and behaviours, it does not, on its own, provide detailed information about street-level behaviours which also impact street-life vitality. Another technique is photo analysis, to evaluate pedestrian density and behaviour types; for example, Dovey and Symons (2014) use photographic surveys to compare street-life within two adjoining Melbourne neighbourhoods. Other urban research employs a *mix* of methods to understand relationships between street-level behaviours and frontage types, as demonstrated in the following examples by Gehl (1971/2006, 2010), Gehl and Svarre (2013), Mehta (2009), and Hassan, Moustafa and El-Fiki (2019).

Gehl, and his practice (Gehl Architects, later Gehl People), are influential in the field of public-life studies. Like other urbanists (Jacobs 1961/2011; Alexander 1977; Whyte 1980; Appleyard 1981), Gehl reacts against the modernist ideology of rational urban planning, the dominance of public space by the car, and the ensuing impacts on public life. An early publication, *Life between buildings: using public space* (Gehl 1971/2006) studied relationships between different types of daily-life activities in the public realm (i.e. necessary, optional and social activities), and how they are impacted by the built environment. *Life between buildings* (ibid., p.187) introduced the concept of *soft edges* i.e. transition zones enabling good connections between indoors and outdoors, as a means to support outdoor stationary or lingering activities, thereby increasing opportunities for social interaction. Originally discussed in relation to residential interfaces, Gehl subsequently expanded the concept of *soft* and *hard* edges as an analysis variable relating to all types of street-level frontages, informing his frontage evaluation scale.

Gehl developed his methods for studying public life in his home city of Copenhagen in the 1960s and 1970s. Since the 1980s, Gehl Architects have conducted extensive *Public Space Public Life* studies in the streets and squares of cities globally, including the capital cities of all Australian states i.e. Melbourne (1994, 2004), Adelaide (2002, 2011), Sydney (2007), Perth (1994, 2009^A), Brisbane (2009^B), and Hobart (2010). Gehl's research methods and data collection tools are explained in the manual *How to study public life* (Gehl and Svarre 2013) and the *Public Life Tools* available on the Gehl People website (Gehl People 2021). Key observation methods employed include: counting (numbers engaged in particular activities) and mapping (location of behaviour types), tracing (recording lines of movement), tracking (following people moving through space), and looking for trace evidence of activities (Gehl and Svarre 2013, pp.22-35). A finding from

Gehl's studies (2010, p.79) of relevance to this inquiry is that the level of activity in front of 'active' façades has been recorded as being seven times higher than in front of 'passive' façades.

Mehta, also studying social behaviours within the street-level public realm, has a similar aim to Gehl i.e. creating 'sociable' public places. However, while Gehl considers all aspects of the public realm, including squares, plazas, and both residential and commercial streets, Mehta concentrates primarily on the neighbourhood commercial street. Mehta (2007, p.166) defines a 'sociable street' as:

A street with the presence of a number of people engaged in a variety of predominantly stationary and sustained activities, particularly those activities that are social in nature[...].

In 'Lively streets' (2007), and 'Look closely and you will see, listen closely and you will hear: urban design and social interaction on streets' (2009), Mehta seeks to understand what microscale physical characteristics support stationary and social activities on three neighbourhood commercial streets in the Boston metropolitan area. In this study Mehta employed a variety of quantitative and qualitative techniques to collect data on the behaviour of residents, workers, and visitors, including observational mapping, and structured surveys to investigate users' perceptions of the street-level environment.

The 'walk-by' and fixed location observational studies undertaken recorded the number of people involved in stationary and sustained activities, the type of activity, and the duration of their stay. The survey and interviews included open-ended questions about, for example, what were the most important things participants would change, or, alternatively, *not* change, about the existing characteristics of the street. A 'liveliness index' was created using the data collected; Mehta, concurring with Gehl, observed that a place would 'feel lively' if there were a small number of people for long durations, or a larger number of people for shorter durations.

Informed by a literature review and analysis of the observational mapping and survey data, Mehta (2007, pp.176-177) identified the qualities and characteristics of the case-study streets that supported social interaction, including both micro-scale physical attributes (concentrating on those experienced at eye-level) and types of businesses. The identified characteristics include sidewalk/footpath width; seating and other street furniture; and shelter provided by trees, awnings and overhangs. In addition, and of relevance to this study, a number of characteristics relate to street-level frontage design, i.e. *permeability of street fronts; articulation of building facade with nooks, corners, alcoves, small setbacks, steps and ledges; and personalization of street fronts.*

Mehta's (ibid.) findings concur with those of Jacobs (1961/2011); Gehl (1971/2006; Gehl and Svarre 2013), and others that street liveliness is linked to a fine-grain mix of building uses, and with Whyte's (1988/2009, p. 44) findings that seating (both formal and incidental) has a 'strong interrelation with liveliness'. According to Mehta (ibid., p. 55), his research also demonstrates that there is a direct correlation between liveliness and permeability, while clarifying that permeability is 'more than mere transparency' and includes 'stores with street-fronts where goods, services and activities inside could be seen heard, touched and/or smelled from outside'.

Similar conclusions to Mehta's were reached in a case study investigating relationships between ground-floor facade design and 'staying activity patterns' along two intersecting streets in a commercial district in Heliopolis, Cairo (Hassan, Moustafa and El-Fiki 2019). The researchers employed walking behaviour observation and counting techniques, and building use and facade morphology mapping. The street-frontage characteristics that were linked to higher levels of observed staying activities included a diversity of ground floor use (including cafes and food outlets); high levels of physical facade permeability, and at least moderate transparency; a complexity of facade articulation and architectural character; generous sidewalk/footpath width; and seating opportunities, i.e. commercial, public and incidental. The authors note that higher levels of physical permeability tended to promote territorialisation (extension of indoor activities onto the sidewalk), and frontage personalisation, which are additional characteristics they link with street-level activity and 'liveliness'.

The Gehl (1971/2006; Gehl and Svarre 2010), Mehta (2009), Dovey and Symons (2014), and Hassan, Moustafa and El-Fiki (2019) research is relevant to this study because all consider relationships between street-level frontage design and street-level behaviours. The conclusions of these studies establish links between street-frontage permeability and/or transparency and levels of street-level activity. However, although they represent a range of cultural contexts (i.e. Western Europe, North America, Africa and Australia), with the exception of the Dovey/Symons investigation in Melbourne's Southbank area, the studies concentrate on fine-grained, established, 'major' central and neighbourhood shopping strips that provide 'a variety of businesses for day-to-day needs and leisure' (Mehta 2009, p. 60). Therefore, the results have only limited application to this inquiry which seeks to understand the effectiveness of active frontage codes requiring 'active everywhere'; specifically, on secondary, mixed-use streets away from main shopping strips.

3.4 Experiential qualities

Another area of scholarship seeks to understand *experiential* qualities of urban public space i.e. a phenomenological approach that looks beyond functional attributes, to appreciate how a

socio-spatial environment is 'sensed', and how it 'feels' (Norberg-Schulz 1980). Montgomery (1998) linked the sensory experience of public space to concepts of vitality, and perceptions of urban quality. Gehl also recognises the experiential qualities of street-level frontage in everyday urban experience; in addition to advocating for soft edges and active frontages, Gehl (Gehl, Kaefer and Reigstad 2006) promotes 'close encounter' architecture i.e. the importance of 'good materials and fine details' at pedestrian level, where there is the opportunity to 'look closely and touch'.

Examples of investigations into perceptions of the street-level public realm include Ewing and Clemente (2013) who looked at relationships between walkability and perceived urban quality, using urban design experts to analyse video still photographs for urban design characteristics, including – amongst others – frontage complexity and transparency. Other studies investigate experiential qualities from the perspective of the street-level *users* (Mehta 2014; Zamanifard, Alizadeh and Coiacetto 2018); however, to date there has been limited inquiry into the relationship between street-level *active* frontages and user perceptions.

One study which *does* specifically investigate the relationship between the quality of active frontages and perceptions of public space found that the 'quality of active frontages can significantly affect people's perceptions of public space in terms of its safety, comfort, sociability and liveliness' (Heffernan, Heffernan and Pan 2014, p.92). However, the authors of this study, which identified visual preference via photo comparison, admit that the varying levels of pedestrian activity shown in the photos may have influenced responses (ibid., p.101). Spanjar and Suurenbroek (2020) also studied visual perceptions of ground floor frontages, using digital recordings of eye-tracking, by landscape architects and urban designers, of photographs of streetscapes. The results indicate that spatial design elements, including active frontages, play a role in appreciation of the street-level public realm; however it was noted that photographs studied in a laboratory setting present 'static' views, and cannot – for example – represent the behaviour of passers-by, and that other, complementary methods (such as surveys and behaviour observations) might also be needed.

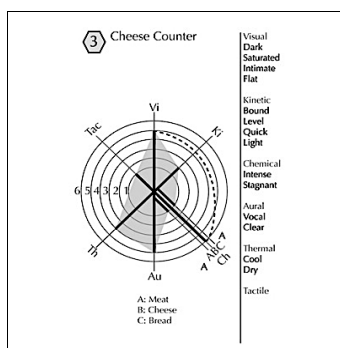
In addition to issues arising from the content of photographic representations, the use of photographs to evaluate users' perceptions of spatial quality is a restricted tool because experience is not limited to visual perception – how a space 'looks'; it encompasses all sensory modalities, including how a space sounds, smells and feels – in other words, its 'atmosphere'⁸. According to Pink (2015), sensory ethnography (or sensory anthropology) has antecedents in the early social theories of philosopher Georg Simmel (1907/1997 p.110), who investigated 'the

⁸ See section 4.2 for further discussion of the concept of atmospheres.

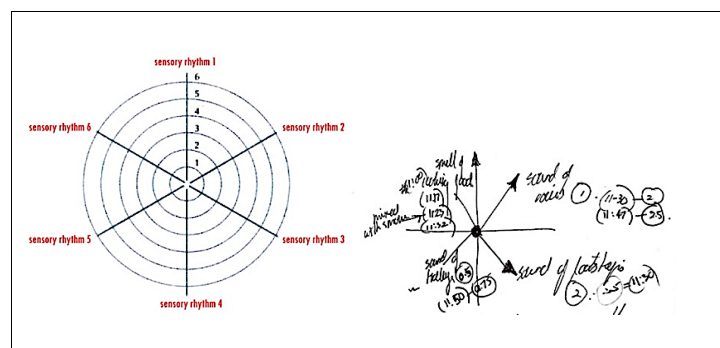
meanings that mutual sensory perception and influencing have for the social life of human beings, their coexistence, cooperation and opposition'. Sensory urbanism has emerged as a field of urban research, focusing on sensory perceptions of the built environment. The literature provides useful insights, including the important role of perceptual memory in sensory experience of urban environments (Degen and Rose 2012; Pink 2015).

While sensory ethnography does not concentrate solely on vision (ocularcentrism), many sensory urban studies do direct their attention to a single sense, rather than multi-sensory perceptions; for example, hearing, by investigating auditory perceptions of different urban environments (Smyrnova and Kang 2010); or smell, relating to the potential of odours to impact on urban place perception (Low 2015) and on place identity and marketing (Henshaw et al. 2016). Examples of *multi-sensorial* studies which have been conducted in the public realm include: an examination of everyday sensory encounters between individuals and the built environment in the centres of two towns in the United Kingdom (Degen and Rose 2012); and a study of emergent multi-sensory spaces and atmospheres generated through sound transformations in a small public park (Sumartojo and Pink 2019).

Sensory research techniques include interview and researcher operated digital (audio and video) recording methods (Pink 2015), and emerging tools developed from neuroscience, such as eye-tracking, and sensors monitoring emotional responses, including galvanic skin response (GSR), and mobile electroencephalograms (EEGs) capturing changes in brain wave activity (Daly et al. 2016). Notation methods for describing and mapping multi-sensory experience in the public realm have also been developed and trialed. In the Lucas (Lucas and Romice 2010) method, sensory modalities are plotted on a radar diagram, depicting which of the senses are engaged more prominently within an urban space or environment, and the connections, or 'collaborations', between the individual senses (figure 3.3 left).



Lucas radar diagram for mapping sensory experience



Palipane's adaptation for mapping multi-sensory experience rhythms

Figure 3.3 Sensory experience notation methods
Source: Left: Lucas and Romice 2010, Right: Palipane 2019

Palipane (2019) has modified the Lucas radar notation method to create a multi-modal mapping technique to record 'sensory rhythms' (rather than separating out the senses) associated with the occupation of space (figure 3.3 right). The Palipane approach is effective in representing the complexity of the sensorial experience. However the technique is suited to recording the experiences of the 'embedded' researcher; whereas this study seeks to understand the experiential qualities of the street-level public realm for *non-researcher* users/participants.

In sum, although none of the multi-sensory literature located to date explicitly investigates the relationship between *active frontages* and the *multi-sensory experiences* of users of the street-level public realm, the sensory ethnography methods developed by others provide a platform for customising a method for this research that seeks to understand relationships between frontage types and users' sensory perceptions of street-life vitality and spatial quality.

3.5 Re-imagining

When street-frontage activation codes are applied, occupancy is considered a successful outcome, whereas vacant shopfronts are seen as a symptom of failure. One approach for 're-imagining' existing street-level frontages focusses on strategies to re-activate vacant shopfronts through the use of temporary, 'pop up,' or 'meanwhile' uses (figure 3.4). These may be unambiguously 'for-profit' uses; for example, start-up businesses, temporary branding exercises for mainstream retailers, or 'meanwhile' activation exercises for future site redevelopment . In the not-for profit sphere, temporary use 're-activation' via arts-led regeneration (e.g. Renew Australia; Meanwhile Foundation UK) is well documented (Munzner and Shaw 2015).



Pop-up retail, Claremont St
Forrest Hill, South Yarra



Temporary shopfront gallery
Bourke St, Melbourne



Renew Australia
Fitzroy St, St Kilda

Figure 3.4 Temporary uses to re-activate vacant shopfronts in Melbourne

Temporary uses, including 'pop-ups', are promoted as affording alternative temporary practice and experimentation, and for supporting incremental change (Bishop and Williams 2012; Westbury 2015). However, the critical urban literature also identifies negative impacts associated with the 'seductions' of temporary urbanism. Ferreri (2015 p.186) categorises 'pop-up' uses as an 'on-demand' model of urban connectivity, and observes that, like other aspects of the 'gig economy', 'pop-up uses' require 'pop-up' people i.e. those in precarious, or intermittent, employment, who can be mobilised quickly for intensive, short periods of time, and may

therefore be impacted by insecurity. Van Schaik (2015, p.9) debates the role of temporary urbanism in gentrification, observing that temporary uses, including ‘pop-ups’, may be ‘stepping stones to gentrification that displace populations’; and Munzner and Shaw (2015) interrogate the validity of moving the responsibility for providing secure, affordable space for cultural production from better resourced government agencies to not-for profit organisations.

Looking beyond temporary re-activation strategies, the evaluation and speculative re-imagining of the public realm, both existing and not-yet, is a mainstream tool in urban design and architecture practice. An example of a re-imaging strategy for street-level frontages is provided by Dovey and Symons (2014). Building on earlier work by Dovey and Wood (2011), Dovey and Symons examine the urban issue of ‘density without intensity’. Highlighting the role of the design of the street-level frontage in mediating street-life intensity, they propose that evaluating the ‘adaptive capacity’ of existing frontages provides a pathway for ‘going beyond typologies of active/passive and slogans such as ‘eyes on the street’ (ibid., p.42).

Having analysed street-frontages in the car-dependent, high-rise residential precinct of Southbank in Melbourne, using the Dovey/Wood typology (see section 3.2) and photo analysis of street-level behaviours (see section 3.3), Dovey and Symons ‘imagine’ adaptation strategies for three existing interfaces that the authors assessed as ‘dysfunctional’. The output is communicated through ‘before and after’ photomontages showing blank interfaces replaced with transparent glazed frontages (figure 3.5).

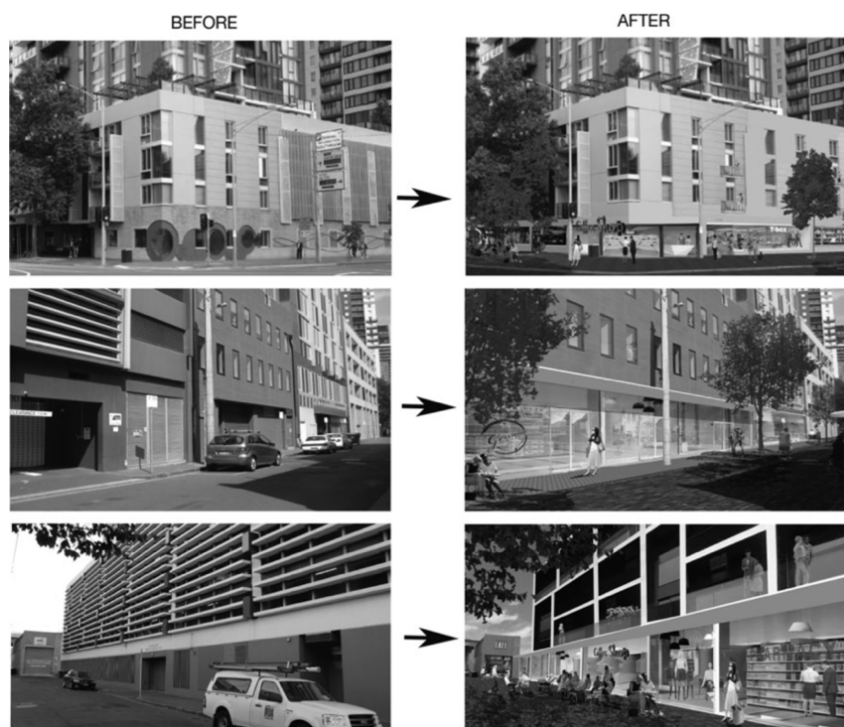


Figure 3.5 Dovey/Symons' Southbank interface transformations
Source: Dovey and Symons 2014

In a second example of a 're-imagining' strategy, Thwaites, Simpson and Simkins (2020) showcase their transitional edges method (see section 3.1) using a case-study of an individual high-street shop, in Sheffield, England, that they identify as having a lower socio-spatial 'score' than the rest of the row of street-level frontages (figure 3.2). The proposed adjustments to the selected shop-front are 'fine-grained' and targeted, dealing with 'operational' characteristics (for example, 'co-ordinate window displays across the different windows in a frontage to enhance visual coherence') and frontage design (for example, 'increase the prominence of the window and door frames to enhance street presence' and 'enhance the prominence of the main doorway entrance') (ibid., p.306).

The Thwaites/Simpson/Simkins' and Dovey/Symons' re-imagining strategies both follow on from initial evaluation work, identifying parts of existing street-level frontages deemed to be underperforming or dysfunctional. They also correspond in formulating proposals for incremental changes, or adaptations, to improve socio/spatial performance. However, a point of divergence is that the Thwaites/Simpson/Simkins transitional edge framework aims to transform fine-grain attributes of frontage design and functional operation to provide more *coherence* along a frontage 'segment'; whereas the Dovey/Symons method is used to understand opportunities for potential adaptations and transformations from one *type* of interface to another. In seeking coherence through transformation or adaptation, the transitional edge approach appears to seek to 'smooth out' variation and difference; the Dovey/Symons approach to adaptation seems more relevant to the concepts of 'looseness', flexibility, and resilience, affording the diversity of use and users identified in Chapter 2.0 as key prerequisites for street-life vitality.

Finally, the Dovey/Symons and Thwaites/Simpson/Simkins examples both demonstrate that trialling an evaluation and re-imagining method in a 'real-life' street-level frontage case study is a valuable tool for testing, and communicating, conceptual frameworks and ideas.

3.6 Conclusions

In summary, the literature review confirms that there has been extensive research into street-level frontages, including studies of relationships between frontage types and street-level behaviours; however, gaps have been identified in the existing urban scholarship including:

- To date, no studies have been located that directly interrogate the effectiveness of active frontage codes in affording street-life vitality.
- Current interface mapping typologies and evaluation tools are not specifically suited to the focus of this inquiry; however, they do provide a platform for developing a research-specific method.

- Existing research studying relationships between frontage types (including active frontages) and street-level behaviours has focused on central business (or activity) districts, or fine-grained residential areas and neighbourhood commercial strips. There has been limited investigation on secondary mixed-use streets proximate to, but separate from, main shopping strips and activity centres. This inquiry is interested in these peripheral locations where form-based active frontage codes often still apply.
- Further, there has been limited investigation into relationships between frontage types and users' sensory perceptions of street-life vitality and spatial quality. An opportunity arises to adapt existing sensory ethnography methods to develop a research method to explore this aspect of the street-level public realm.
- Finally, existing case study research re-imagining street-level frontages has demonstrated that this strategy is useful for testing ideas about adapting *existing* frontages. There is scope to apply this approach to test alternative strategies for *new* frontages.

Having identified gaps for further inquiry, Chapter 4.0 will introduce Affordance Theory as the foundation for the conceptual framework for this research.

4.0 Affordances

The Chapter 3.0 review of existing urban literature identified gaps in the research relating to street-level active frontages, including relationships between frontage types and street-level behaviours and sensory experiences, and users' perceptions of street-life vitality and spatial quality.

This chapter introduces Affordance Theory as a conceptual framework for this research. Commencing with a brief explanation of the theory, the evolution of its application in urban design, architecture, and related fields, and the concept of sensory affordances – or atmospheres – are discussed. A rationale is provided for why an affordance-based approach is an appropriate and beneficial theoretical framework for this investigation of the street-level public/private interface: both as a structure for case study site investigations to evaluate the effectiveness of current active frontage codes, and for exploring alternative possibilities, as per the second and third research questions:

What street-edge morphology, and/or function, might be more effective than prescribed transparent retail frontages in affording street-life vitality?

and

What urban design strategies and tactics could afford these alternative street-level interfaces?

The final section considers how active frontage codes may restrict or erode affordances supporting the diversity (of users, use and sensory experience) that is linked to street-life vitality.

4.1 Affordance theory

The Theory of Affordances was introduced in the 1960s by environmental psychologist James J. Gibson, and crystallised in his influential publication, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (1979). Gibson (1979/2015, p.119) coined the term affordance to explain what the environment affords – or offers – an animal, 'either for good or ill'. According to Gibson (ibid.), affordances are possibilities for action that exist in the environment, whether an animal takes advantage of the offer or not, or even knows about it. Gibson proposed that affordances are also unique to that animal, and provided an oft-quoted example i.e. the surface of water will afford support and locomotion to a water bug, but not to a human. In brief, any behaviour requires perception of affordances, and these affordances are revealed as the consequence of a specific relationship between the animal (or actor) and their individual environment.

Gibson (ibid., p.121) states that affordances are neither physical nor phenomenal; but, at the same time, they are both:

‘An affordance cuts across the dichotomy of subjective and objective and helps us to understand its inadequacy. It is equally a fact of the environment and a fact of behavior’.

For example, the affordance of supportability ‘looks both ways’ (to use Gibson’s description) i.e. to the objective (the environment) *and* the subjective (the animal or agent). This concept is of relevance to this research which aims to examine how the environment of the street-level interface affords vital street-life by considering both spatial/physical and social/behavioural attributes.

Gibson’s theory of affordances has influenced many disciplines beyond the field of psychology, including architecture and urban design. According to Mace (2015, p.xxvi), this is largely due to promotion by psychophysicist Donald Norman. In his publication *The Psychology of Everyday Things* (1988), Norman’s interpretation and application of affordance theory (which he later revisited and qualified) focused on employing perceived affordances as a strategy to improve the ‘usability’ of designed objects. The message is that ‘good design’ is implicit, directing an agent on how best to use an artefact with little or no further explanation required. This research seeks to look beyond this somewhat deterministic view of affordance. As Dovey (2016, p.42) notes:

‘The task for urban design is one of *maximizing* rather than determining affordances’ (my emphasis).

A review of literature from the past two decades reveals that Gibson’s affordance theory continues to generate academic interest focused on a variety of affordance based concepts, including: the classification of different types of affordances (Hartson 2003); the application of affordance theory to building spaces and building elements (Koutamanis 2006); an affordance based approach to architectural theory, design and practice (Maier, Fadel and Battisto 2009); an affordance framework for the perception of landscape (Heft 2010) and the design of urban green space (Lennon, Douglas and Scott 2017); affordances and agency (Withagen et al. 2012; Withagen, de Poel and Araujo 2017); and skilled practice engagement with affordances (Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014). A discussion follows of two selected affordance-based lines of inquiry that are useful to this research i.e. Maier, Fadel and Battisto, (2009) who propose affordances as a pathway for understanding links between intended and actual outcomes; and Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014) who look to affordances as an instrument for developing innovative and creative practices.

Maier, Fadel and Battisto (2009 p.393), in their proposition for an affordance-based approach to architectural theory, design, and practice, identify affordances as ‘a tool to explore the connection between the intentions of the design with how the artifact is actually used, leading

to archived knowledge to be used in future projects [...]. This concept is relevant to the case study research method adopted for this study i.e. a form of post-occupancy evaluation to interrogate relationships between the *intended* affordances of active frontage codes and how the built outcomes (the ‘artifacts’) *enable* affordances.

A second line of inquiry looks at strategies for maximising affordances. Gibson (1979/2015, p.135) acknowledged that humans can manipulate affordances, proposing that ‘within limits, the human animal can alter the affordances of the environment but is still the creature of his or her situation’. Philosophers Erik Rietveld and Julian Kiverstein (2014) challenge Gibson’s constrained view of limited human agency by proposing that affordances are not just resources provided by the physical and material environment; affordances depend on the *abilities* of the animal. Rietveld and Kiverstein (ibid., p.326) call this ‘skilled based practice’, and argue that because the human animal has many abilities, including language, we inhabit ‘a rich landscape of affordances’. RAAAF (Rietveld Architecture Art Affordances) have tested their ideas through practice; for example, the End of Sitting ‘enactive’ spatial installation (in collaboration with artist Barbara Visser) demonstrates an alternative office ‘landscape’ of standing/leaning/reclining affordances (figure 4.1 left). In a public realm example, located in the Museum Quartier courtyard in Vienna, the versatile urban furniture designed by PPAG Architects affords ‘loose’ appropriation, urban play, and self-expression (figure 4.1 right).



The End of Sitting exhibition, RAAAF with artist Barbara Visser, Amsterdam 2015



Public realm installation in the MQ courtyard, PPAG Architects, Vienna 2003 - current

Fig 4.1 ‘Landscapes’ of affordances

Photos: Left: ©Jan Kempenaers, Right: ©Sisc01

The premise that humans can use their abilities to change their situation - to create a richer and more diverse range of affordances - may appear self-evident, but it is an important development of Gibson’s original theory which proposed that humans have only limited capacity to alter the affordances offered by their personal environment. Rietveld and Kiverstein (ibid., p.350) encourage the creative professions to explore beyond the conventional boundaries of their own field and/or culture to learn new and innovative skills, to unlock ‘unconventional but relevant affordances’. This approach is pertinent to the goal of this research i.e. to identify alternative, and more creative, strategies for street-level interfaces to support and sustain vital street-life.

4.2 Atmospheres

Gibson's theory of affordances is linked to visual perception; Gibson (1979/2015, p.132) referred to 'ecological optics', and explained affordances as opportunities for action that emerge when 'information is available in ambient light for perceiving them'. Hartson (2003) expanded on the work of Gibson and Norman to propose four categories of affordance: cognitive, physical, functional, and sensory.⁹ Other sub-categories of affordance have also been identified; for example, in the field of social neuroscience, social affordances are defined as 'possibilities for social interaction offered by the environment' (Rietveld, de Haan and Denys 2013, p.436).

One implication is that the quality of the street-level interface cannot be solely assessed by the physical and social affordances it provides; of equal importance is how it 'feels' to the user. Montgomery (1998) identified sensory experience as one of the 'three essential ingredients' of the quality of urban places (the others being physical space and activity). This research therefore looks to an affordance-based approach that goes beyond creating opportunities for action to engage with the sensory realm, where sensory affordances involve all the senses, not just vision.

To further explore the category of sensory affordance, I look to the concept of 'atmosphere' – a term that has antecedents in the phenomenology of perception, specifically the writings of philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945), and which is the focus of recent research in the fields of philosophy, sociology, human geography and urban studies, including architecture. While definitions of atmosphere vary, the *Oxford Dictionary of English* (2015^B) definition of a 'pervading tone or mood' is a useful starting point. In their introduction to the anthology *Building Atmosphere*, the editors (Havik, Teerds and Tielens 2013, p.3) propose that atmosphere, although elusive, can be 'identified intuitively', suggesting that 'atmosphere is part of what can be called common sense: knowledge and experience embodied in a larger community, able to be shared and exchanged'.

Aligning with the concept that affordances (including sensory affordances) exist in the environment whether they are identified or actioned, or not, Sumartojo and Pink (2019, p.4) conceptualise atmospheres '[...] as always existing, with understanding them being a question of attunement and attention to what has to configure them to exist'. They posit that atmospheres are not fixed in space or time; rather, they are emergent, dynamic, and contingent on 'specific configurations of sensation, temporality, movement, memory, our material and immaterial surroundings, and other people' (ibid., p.6). This emergent, uncertain quality (rather than pre-determined) means that atmospheres 'are a source of potential and opportunity' (ibid., p.98).

⁹ Hartson (2003, p.522) is concerned with 'usability engineering' and limits his definition of sensory affordance to the physical act of sensing in a supporting role to physical affordances, deliberately excluding sensory aspects associated with perception.

Scholars who link atmosphere to spatial experience and architectural quality include philosopher Gerhart Böhme (2013^A, 2013^B, 2017), architect/philosopher Juhani Pallasmaa (2005, 2013), and Pritzker Prize winning architect, Peter Zumthor (2006). Böhme (2017, p.20), who references philosopher Hermann Schmitz's definition of atmospheres as 'moving emotional powers, spatial carriers of moods', describes atmospheres as 'attuned spaces', experienced through 'felt bodily presence' (ibid., p.69). Dovey (2016, p.121) observes that Böhme's concept of atmosphere, which embraces all the senses including taste and smell, is 'embedded in the materiality of the city and has a thing-like quality, but is essentially defined as a feel'.

Pallasmaa believes that atmospheres are experienced in an 'unfocused and partly unconscious manner', with 'peripheral perception' (Havik and Tielens 2013^A, p.45). Pallasmaa identifies those he considers to be 'atmospheric architects of modernity', including (amongst others) Alvar Alto, Gunnar Asplund, Frank Lloyd Wright, Juha Leiviskä and Peter Zumthor (figure 4.2); however, he is critical of the dominance of the visual over other senses, and the lack of 'immediate experience' in much modern architecture (2013, p.53):

'Modernity at large has been more interested in form than feeling, surface than materiality and texture, focused imagery than enveloping space, shape than ambience and atmosphere. Yet there are modern and contemporary architects whose spaces have an atmospheric character, that one feels as a haptic embrace on one's body rather than as a mere external retinal image. These atmospheric spaces engage us and make us participants in the space instead of remaining as inactive onlookers'.

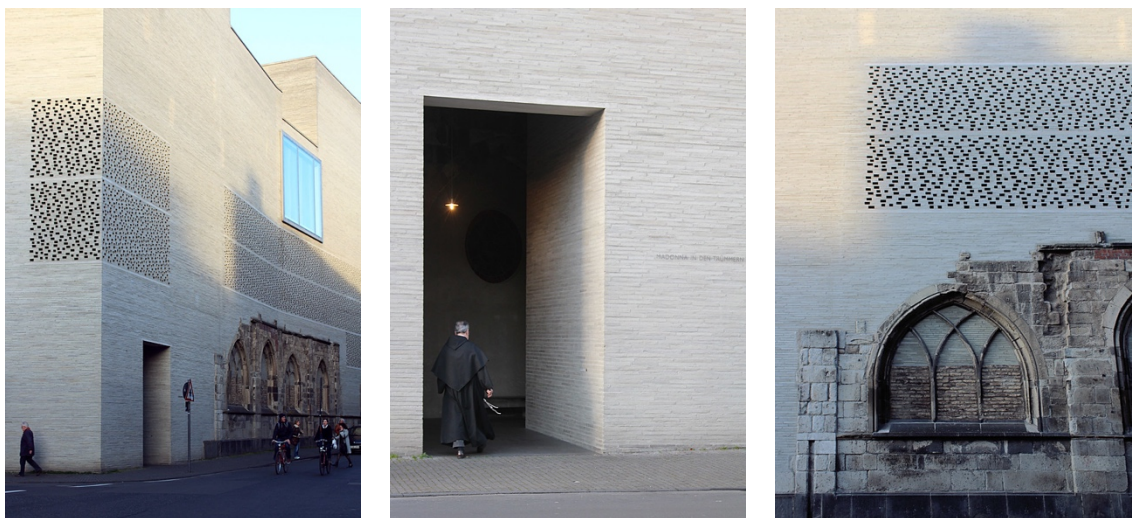


Fig 4.2 Atmospheric architecture, Kolumba Museum, Köln, Germany. Architect: Peter Zumthor 2007
Photos: Trevor Pratt

For Zumthor (2006, p.12), atmosphere is 'perceived through our emotional sensibility – a form of perception that works incredibly quickly and which we humans evidently need to help us survive'. He sees atmosphere as a 'foundation stone of architectural quality', and, for Zumthor (ibid., p.11), quality architecture is 'when a building manages to move him'. Zumthor (ibid., pp.49-

57) believes that creating atmospheres ‘comes down to craft and graft’ and he identifies nine instruments, or processes that are the products of ‘personal sensibilities’, which he employs when trying to ‘generate a certain atmosphere in his buildings’. These include material presence and materiality, the sound and temperature of spaces, tensions experienced at the threshold between interior and exterior, and levels of intimacy – which not only deals with dimension or mass (i.e. from building scale down to the door latch) but also proximity.

Böhme, Zumthor, and Pallasmaa converge in identifying two key instruments or tools they argue can be useful in the creation of atmospheres in new settings i.e. details and materiality. Böhme argues that things, including materials, ‘emanate atmospheres’ and affect space (Havik and Tielens 2013^B, p.61). Like Pallasmaa, Böhme (2017, p.66) comments on the surface materiality of modern construction materials, and observes that a focus on the aesthetics of surface, standardisation, homogeneity and scratch resistance means that the ‘experience of materials as concrete matter is diminishing’. Zumthor’s (2006, pp.23-29) ‘grand secret, great passion, a joy forever’ is material compatibility i.e. the way materials react off one another, and the critical proximity between differing materials.

The question arises – if sensory affordances/atmospheres are always emergent, and ‘realised’ (or ‘actualised’) by the individual ‘user’, how can they be deliberately created or generated? The answer is that they can’t; however, as Sumartojo and Pink (2019) observe, attunement is possible to the conditions that enable them to exist. For example, (as per Gehl’s promotion of ‘close-encounter’ architecture), attention paid to the affective qualities of materials and detailing employed in the design of street-level frontages, where they can be touched and appreciated in a multi-sensory way, may initiate sensory affordances that contribute to perceptions of urban quality.

That said, a challenge for this research is to consider how detailing and materiality can be employed to afford atmospheres in supportive, non-contrived ways. While recognising the important relationship between atmospheres and urban quality, Böhme is critical of the ‘manipulative and coercive uses of atmospheric production’ by the ‘contemporary aesthetic economy’ (Dorrian 2017, p.xii). Borch (2014, p.62), writing about the politics of atmospheres, concurs, and argues that ‘the design of architectural atmospheres might be seen as a subtle form of power, in which behaviour, design and experiences are governed or managed without people being consciously aware of this’. Therefore, rather than manipulating affordances to achieve a pre-conceived, or orchestrated, *specific* atmospheric objective, a key goal is enabling street-level interfaces which *maximise* sensory affordances and atmospheres.

4.3 Affordance framework

The following diagram (figure 4.3) offers an overview of relationships for street-level public/private interfaces, reflecting the key characteristics of actor/user, functional use, and interface design, where potential affordances (opportunities and constraints) are offered at the intersections, or overlap, of these determinants.

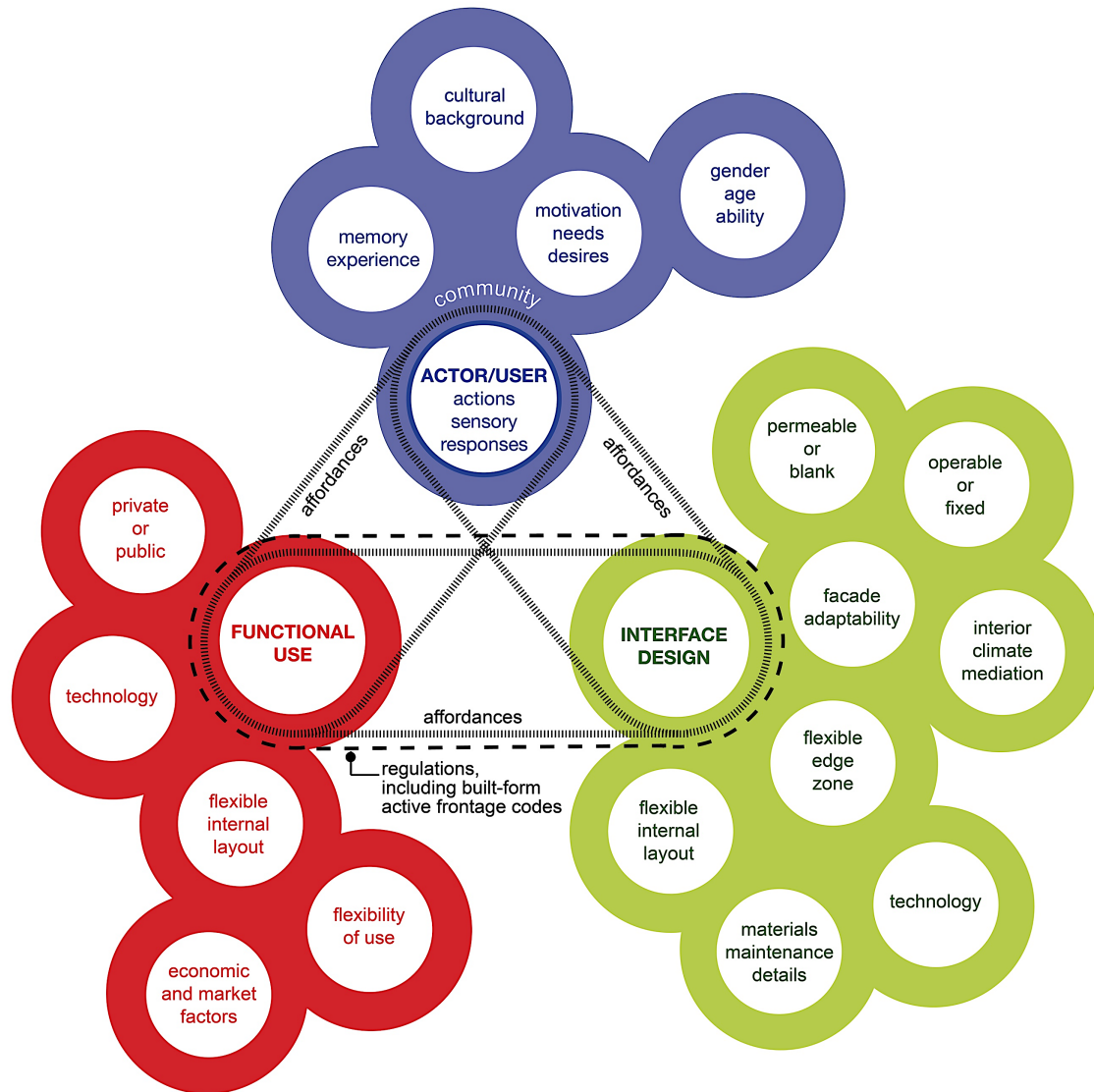


Fig 4.3 Relational diagram for street-level public/private interfaces

Diagrams are reductive abstractions, simplifying complex inter-relationships to a limited number of characteristics and interconnections that can be represented graphically within the diagram. Further, a 'static' representation can never fully capture the emergent and dynamic nature of affordances. However, within these limitations, this 'condensed' visual representation of inter-relations at street-level frontages provides a useful reference framework for this research.

To recap, an affordance-based approach is a useful conceptual framework for this research for the following reasons:

- It provides an opportunity to ‘step outside’ the ‘persistent puzzle’ (Amundson 2016) of the subjective/objective dichotomy when considering the relational co-dependency of agency and environment.
- Affordances are multi-scalar, allowing for analysis from the neighbourhood scale to the individual frontage to fine grain detail and materiality.
- Through sensory affordances, or atmospheres, it offers a strategy for looking beyond the physical environment to also encompass emotional sensibility and the relationship between multi-sensory perception and urban quality.
- An affordance-based approach offers tools for post-occupancy evaluation of how built environment outcomes support, or restrict, affordances, both intended and accidental.
- It also offers the opportunity to investigate creative solutions for the street-level interface by looking to exemplars and other socio-cultural practices to unlock ‘unconventional, but relevant’, affordances (Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014).

The limitations of an affordance-based research framework must also be recognised. Affordances are ‘potentialities’, present in the environment, whether they are actioned, or not (see section 4.1). While some affordances leave physical traces, many are fleeting and ephemeral; therefore, for the researcher to understand and capture affordances, it is often a matter of being there ‘at the right place, at the right time’. Affordances offered by the physical environment may also be constantly emerging and evolving; as Wohl (2016, p.44) notes, ‘each material setting, once established, sets into motion, subsequent affordances’. In addition, affordances are subject to a dynamic multitude of shifting factors beyond the material built environment, including (but not limited to): temporality and urban rhythms, climatic conditions, and attributes of the participating actors i.e. physical abilities, gender, age, cultural background, experience, memories, motivations, and desires.

4.4 Active frontage codes and affordances

This section revisits the active frontage policies and codes, introduced in section 2.3, through a lens of affordance theory, to offer a critique (informed by existing urban studies) of current active frontage codes. Active frontage policies and codes have been adopted in response to perceived failures in the street-level public realm. In Melbourne’s Central Activity District, the active edges policy has been used to encourage commercial activity to re-activate street-level frontages that had previously been ‘deadened’ by extensive blank walls (Jones 2018). Active frontage codes can also impact positively on the diversity of ground-floor building use. Jones (*ibid.*, p.116)

observes that Melbourne's prioritisation of active frontage codes has had 'generally successful' results, with one outcome being that developers began providing mixed-uses in the base of office blocks, 'something they had previously been reluctant to do'.

While recognising the beneficial outcomes that active frontages may afford, this research starts with the hypothesis that active frontage codes promoting expansive glazed retail shopfronts may not *a/ways* be effective in achieving the goal of affording and supporting street-life vitality. A review of existing urban related literature supports this position, and has informed the following examples of the ways in which the limitations imposed by active frontage codes may be linked to negative impacts on affordances.

The generic city

Active frontage codes requiring expansive glazed facades and promoting retail uses fuel homogenisation, by requiring a formula-based uniformity of activity and built form (figure 4.4). The negative impacts of homogenisation include erosion of affordances supporting the diversity identified by Jacobs (1961/2011), and others, as being essential to urban vitality. Homogenisation is also linked to globalisation, the rise of the 'generic city' (Koolhaas 1997), and the associated negative impacts on place identity (Relph 1976; Bobić 2004; Dovey 1999, 2016).



Gold Coast, Australia



Melbourne, Australia



Durban, South Africa

Figure 4.4 Generic glazed shopfronts
Photos: Left, right: Google Streetview

The exclusive city

Active frontages can be used as a 'soft control' to attract some participants while eliminating 'undesirable' behaviours i.e. privileging the 'comfort' and 'quality of life' rights of individuals with influence while eroding affordances offered to some members of society, contra to ideals of 'spatial justice'. Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht (2009, p.59) observe that 'a just city allows diversity to stimulate greater diversity'. The important role of 'conflict/territorial skirmishes' and 'civil inattention' in fostering urbanity has also been identified (Sennett 1971; Lofland 1998; Bobić 2004). As Dovey (2016, p.270) notes, 'while urbanity cannot thrive without safety it also cannot thrive without risk'.

The inflexible city

Active frontage codes can limit frontage adaptability, and restrict alternative uses. Historically, retail synergies have relied on a consistency of transparent interfaces. However, as Dovey and Wood (2015, p.15) observe, these synergies can no longer be relied upon, with the current e-commerce disruptions to 'bricks and mortar' retail being a contributing factor in their demise. A requirement for large areas of transparent glazing (often partnered with restrictive land-use zoning) promotes retail activities, and can make adaptation of frontages to afford new and innovative uses more difficult. Inflexibility (both of built-form and use) is also linked to environmental unsustainability; as Sennett (1992, p. 98) declares, if buildings are difficult to convert to other uses the physical urban fabric becomes 'rigid and brittle'. A sustainable city is resilient through adaptability to change (Bergevoet and van Tuijl 2016).

The dull city

Active frontage policy that seeks to eliminate all areas of 'blankness', or 'vacuums' (Dovey 2016, p.51) in urban public space, restricts sites affording spontaneous, responsive and transformative urbanity. In Gehl's (2010, p.241) graded interface typology, the opposite of an active frontage is an inactive or passive frontage. A blank wall may be sometimes passive, or 'boring'; however, a blank wall can also afford opportunities for alternative occupation and appropriation for activities not linked to consumerism, including temporary/tactical resistance (Dovey 2016), urban play (Stevens 2007), and non-commodified self-expression (Mattern 2016) (figure 4.5). Solà-Morales (1995, p.122) describes these urban affordances as '*Terrain Vague*': indeterminate, empty and marginalised urban spaces offering 'refuge' from the 'crushing homogeneity' of the city by providing opportunities for creativity.



Covid-19 street art, Scott Alley, Melbourne



Wall riding, Havana, Cuba

Figure 4.5 Blank walls affording informal appropriation, self-expression and urban play

Photos: Left: ©The Age/Wayne Taylor, Right: ©Jonathan Drake

In sum, collating this list of the ways in which active frontage codes may *limit* or *erode* urban affordances was the first step towards gaining an enhanced understanding of the effectiveness of these codes in promoting and supporting the diversity of users and use necessary to afford vital street-life.

4.5 Conclusions

Affordance theory offers a pathway to understand relationships between the environment of the street-level public/private interface, and the street-level user. As well as physical affordances, supporting opportunities for physical actions and social interactions, affordances may also be sensory, impacting atmospheres. Active frontage policy and codes are intended to afford economic vitality, perceptions of security, and street-life vibrancy; however they may limit or erode physical and sensory urban affordances, leading to negative outcomes. An affordance framework is useful for both analysis of the impacts of active frontage codes, and also for 're-imagining' alternative tactics and scenarios.

This thesis considers how the application of an affordance based framework might inform urban design strategies for the street-level interface. While all urban design is inherently affordance - based, the aim is to maximise, rather than determine, affordances. i.e. instead of attempting to 'solve' a problem, by manipulating affordances to pursue a specific goal, the strategy is to create a framework where multiple outcomes are possible. Chapter 2.0 discussed the importance of diversity of users and use, and the key role of the density and complexity of engagements between diverse users in affording urban vitality; further, this chapter has introduced the contribution of sensory affordances to perceptions of urban quality. Responding to these key determinants, the following urban design strategies, aiming to *maximise affordances* supporting diversity of use, users and sensory experience at the street-level public/private interface, are proposed as strategies for further consideration in this research:

- 01. Enable street-level interfaces which afford a diversity of users and use.**
- 02. Allow a variety of engagements between users, and between users and the street-level built interface.**
- 03. Enrich street-level sensory experiences.**

Having established that an affordance based-approach provides a relevant and useful conceptual framework for this research investigating the impacts of active frontage codes on the physical and experiential environments of street-level frontages, the next chapter presents the research methods employed for this inquiry.

5.0 Research methodology

The aim of this research is to gain an enhanced understanding of the effectiveness of current active frontage codes in affording vital street-life, and to investigate alternative – and more creative – urban governance, planning, and design strategies for street-level frontages that might more effectively afford vital street-life.

Having introduced a conceptual, affordance-based framework for this research in Chapter 4.0, this chapter presents the mixed-method research approach adopted for this study i.e. descriptive and analytical case study research, followed by reference exemplar investigation and abductive analysis, and speculative ‘re-imagining’. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the research methods.

5.1 Case study research

This research begins with the interrogation of the first research question:

How effective are current active frontage codes in affording an interactive and vital street-life?

To address this question, this research seeks to examine the impacts of current active frontage codes on street-life vitality within a ‘real life’ urban environment, and looks to a case study to provide this context.

Case study research is useful to ‘develop intense knowledge about one complex object’, where an ‘object’ may be individuals, buildings, episodes, institutions, processes, and societies (Zeisel 2006, p.98). Groat and Wang (2013, p.421) observe: ‘the essence of the case study is its focus on studying a setting or phenomenon in its real-life context’. Referencing Yin (2009), they note that the case study is more than simply ‘studying a phenomenon in the field’; it requires ‘an analytical approach that goes beyond mere observation to consider the complex dynamics which impact upon the case, and from which the case cannot be separated or understood in isolation’.

This analytical approach accords with the focus of this case study research i.e. to gain an enhanced understanding of the complex dynamics in play by investigating relationships between frontage types and street-life vitality. A case study research approach also allows a variety of quantitative/empirical and qualitative methods to be employed, providing the framework to investigate both the physical and non-physical/sensory affordances offered by street-level frontages, and to understand the correlations and contradictions between these affordances.

Zeisel (2006, p.99) notes that if the setting of the selected case study is 'typical of other settings', the data generated may also be useful for drawing general conclusions. Therefore, this study could also provide insights for understanding the dynamics in other precincts where active frontage codes apply, both within the wider Melbourne urban context and further afield. While recognising the limitations of a single case (i.e. a lack of comparison), this approach is appropriate for this study as more detailed investigations were possible through concentrating on one setting, rather than 'diluting' available resources (time and labour) looking at multiple cases in less depth.

Selection of the case study site

From a preliminary scoping of potential Melbourne case study areas where active frontage codes apply, the following key inclusion criteria were identified as being congruent with the focus of this research:

- areas that are undergoing a process of change, with a mix of developments completed in the past 5 -10 years, and contiguous grouping(s) of buildings, rather than collections of isolated or 'island' sites. Recent development provides the opportunity to evaluate 'as built' responses to applied active frontage codes, while contiguous groupings are required to generate the synergies necessary to provide a representative sampling of street-life;
- precincts that are located on secondary or side streets, rather than main street shopping strips. Secondary streets are of interest to this research, to test the hypothesis that active frontage codes prescribing transparent shopfronts may be less relevant beyond the main retail strips;
- a mix of uses, including both commercial and residential, to support the diversity of activity required for street-life vitality;
- proximity to a public transport route, to provide social diversity rather than the homogenous demographic which might be represented within an area frequented only by local residents;
- sharing characteristics with other areas of recent mixed-use development, to provide opportunities for insights in precincts beyond the selected case study area, and the foundation for possible future comparative research in additional case areas.

Further case study scoping was then completed in four locations within inner and middle-ring Melbourne suburbs (refer appendix A). From this investigation, the emergent higher-density, mixed-use Forrest Hill precinct in the suburb of South Yarra was identified as providing the strongest correlation with the nominated case study selection criteria, and was selected for the exploratory case study.

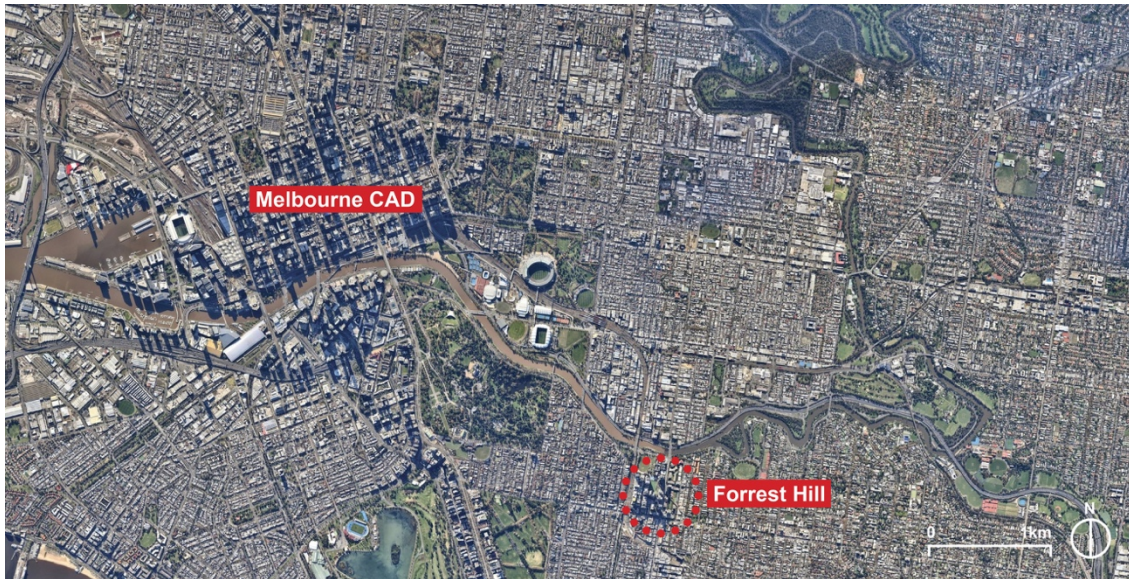


Figure 5.1: Location of the Forrest Hill case study area
Source: Nearmap 2020

Forrest Hill¹⁰, an 8-hectare former light-industrial area located 3 km south-east of Melbourne's Central Activities District (CAD) (figure 5.1), has undergone high-density mixed-use redevelopment since the 2003 closure of the two main factories operating within the precinct. Lacking the iconic redundant-industrial heritage buildings present within other inner-ring Melbourne suburbs, Forrest Hill provided a 'clean slate' for the type of urban intensification promoted in the State Government's *Plan Melbourne 2030 – planning for sustainable growth* (State Government of Victoria 2002). In the past fifteen years, more than thirty towers (ranging from 15 to 50-storeys) have been built, with more under construction or at planning permit application stage. The population of Forrest Hill grew from 151 residents in 2006 to 4,625 residents in 2016, with an increase to 8,213 residents projected by 2021, and 10,502 by 2026¹¹. The number of commercial office and retail workers has been predicted to reach 4,400.¹²

A more detailed description of the Forrest Hill precinct, including relevant planning policies and codes, is included in Chapter 6.0. Figure 5.2 shows the boundaries of the selected case-study site.

¹⁰ Not to be confused with the similarly named suburb of Forest Hill, located 18km east of the Melbourne CAD.

¹¹ i.d.consultants, July 2016, <<https://forecast.id.com.au/stonnington/accessibility-forecast>> accessed 14.02.19

¹² Urbis Consultants and CKC forecast, cited in Hopkins (2011).



Figure 5.2 Aerial view of the Forrest Hill case study site
Source: Nearmap. Image dated 17 December 2017

Background research

Background research, completed to inform the site investigations and data evaluation, included: archive research to gain insights into the history of the development of the case study area; a review of relevant strategic planning documentation relating to active frontage and zoning (land-use) codes, and other planning codes that impact on built form and use; discourse analysis, i.e. a review of relevant articles, urban design and architecture critiques; and informal discussions with urban designers, planners and architects who are familiar with the recent transformation of the Forrest Hill precinct.

Site fieldwork methods

The focus of the fieldwork was to investigate how the built environment outcomes, and building occupancy/uses, support or restrict affordances (both intended and unconventional). The following methods were employed:

Analytical mapping of street-level morphology and functional mix

Mapping street-level morphological attributes and functional mix are key themes in urban design; the mapping for this research is used as a framework to investigate synergies between active frontage codes and affordances. The street-level morphological attributes mapped include building footprints and the contiguous public realm; functional mix and functional grain size; public/private interface types; and the quality of materials and detailing of building frontages and adjacent public footpaths.

Functional mix

When mapping street-level land uses, this study has referenced the Dovey and Pafka (2017) primary function categories of Live, Work and Visit. Building on earlier work completed by Hoek

(2008), and Nes, Bergauser Pont and Mashoodi (2012), Dovey and Pafka have developed a model of functional mix, which they call the live/work/visit triangle (live shown in red, work in blue, and visit in green), which captures the flows and interrelations between the primary use categories. The functional mix mapping of the case study site was completed at the fine-grain scale of individual tenancies, rather than the larger scale of building allotments, to provide a nuanced understanding of the street-level co-functioning mix. Vacancy was also recorded.

Interface types

A frontage typology for the case study was developed, referencing the Dovey/Wood (2018) typology (figure 3.1). The Dovey/Wood method, which interrogates frontage adaptability and the links to urban innovation, has been adapted to reflect the focus of this study i.e. an investigation of the relationships between form-based active frontage codes requiring expansive areas of transparent glazing, and physical and sensory affordances. The adapted typology is illustrated in figure 5.3; a brief explanation of the primary differences from the Dovey/Wood method follows:

First, the Dovey/Wood typology only classifies the interface at the legal boundary between public and private property. A wall built to the boundary with window or entry door opening onto the street is *direct*; when the building frontage is set-back, the *transition* space is a type - not the wall beyond. Whereas, for this study, if access over the transition space is unrestricted then the recessed building frontage is also relevant for the affordances it may offer. Therefore frontages may have two types i.e. one at the front boundary and another for the building frontage.

Second, the key variables vary somewhat from the Dovey/Wood typology which considers the dynamics of transformation and adaptation (see section 3.2); while frontage adaptability (impacting affordances) is relevant for this study, the broader concern is understanding the impacts of different frontage types on street-level physical and sensory affordances. For example, the Dovey/Wood type *direct/transparent* includes any form of transparency on the front boundary; whereas, in the adapted typology, ***transparent 'active'*** frontages actualise built form that complies with the 60%-80% glazing/entry formula of active frontage codes. In reality, they may be neither 'transparent' (for example, having internal blinds) nor 'activated'; however, this classification is useful because the hypothesis being tested is that form-based active frontage codes may not always achieve their intended affordances i.e. an intended affordance 'eyes on the street' doesn't happen if the blind is closed. The alternative, ***non-standard*** frontages may still have some transparency/porosity but less than the 60%-80% threshold; and this type may include blank frontages, but only if they exhibit some form of 'considered' design treatment. ***Impermeable/blank*** applies to 'non-considered' forms of blankness, including monotonous lengths of unrelieved blank frontage and poorly designed services enclosures; whereas in the Dovey/Wood types *all* non-transparent/non-porous interfaces are classified *impermeable/blank*.

Street-level interface types



Transparent 'active' frontage

Frontages that *actualise* built-form active frontage codes requiring 60% - 80% of the frontage to be transparent glazing or entry.

Includes frontages where the transparent glazing is obscured (in part, or fully) by internal blinds, applied signage, or internal furniture or 'clutter' i.e. in reality, they may be neither 'transparent' nor 'activated'.



Non-standard frontage

Frontages that may have fenestration but the area of transparent glazing or entry is less than the 60% - 80% glazing/entry threshold required by active frontage codes.

This type may also include blank frontages, but only if they have had some form of 'considered' design treatment (e.g. detailing, articulation, materiality), or been appropriated for an alternative use.



Impermeable/blank frontage

No façade transparency or physical entries.

Includes long monotonous blank frontages and services enclosures where there is *no* visible evidence of a deliberate or 'considered' design approach, contrasting with the non-standard type.

The following interface types may coexist and/or 'overlap' with the types listed above:



Pedestrian transition/entry

Pedestrian transition space and/or building entry point.



Car transition/entry

Carparking at street-level, or entry to a carpark located in a basement or podium.

Figure 5.3 Frontage typology adopted for this research, with examples from the Forrest Hill case study

Third, while the Dovey/Wood typology is descriptive, the adapted typology physically ‘measures’ the extent of glazing and/or entry. In this aspect it shares a commonality with the Gehl scale which also ‘measures’. However, unlike the Gehl scale, the purpose is not to evaluate or ‘grade’ frontages; rather, it is to delineate frontages that actualise the glazing/entry percentage required by active frontage codes from other frontage types.

Quality of materials and details

The quality of frontage materials and detailing was mapped, as a factor impacting perceptions of urban quality and sensory affordances/atmospheres. The street-level facade and the footpath area between the building and the roadway were assessed, using the following criteria. Although this assessment was, to an extent, subjective, it was informed by my 30-years’ experience in architectural practice which has provided an understanding of material and detailing finesse and robustness, and how to recognise materials and construction details that will not ‘age well’.

Building frontage quality

- *Better than standard quality*: durable materials with integral finishes; customised and well-considered building detailing; consistency in materiality and detailing between different elements of the facade; interesting textures or facade depths to provide visual relief; design response that considers climatic impacts for users of both the building interior and the public realm; integrated and well-designed services and signage; well-maintained frontage.
- *Standard quality*: standard materials and applied finishes; flat surfaces with little visual relief; standard details such as aluminium shopfront glazing; reasonable level of maintenance.
- *Poor quality*: ordinary materials and applied finishes that require a lot of ongoing maintenance and do not age well; ill-considered detailing; no consideration of climatic/environmental impacts on users of the building interior or the public realm; poorly designed services; haphazardly applied signage; poorly maintained frontage.

Footpath quality

- *Better than standard quality*: good quality paving materials such as stone, brick or coloured concrete; integrated pattern and cohesive design; good level of maintenance.
- *Standard quality*: standard municipal concrete paving; reasonable level of maintenance.
- *Poor quality*: standard asphalt or poor quality concrete; broken, poorly patched or uneven.

The data collected for the interface types, tenancy use or vacancy, and the quality of materials and detailing was then used to generate the ‘base map’ for recording the location of observed behaviours and activities, including unconventional affordances, and walk-along participant comments regarding sensory perceptions relating to frontage types.

Observation and behaviour mapping of street level activities, rhythms and flows

The purpose of this observation and mapping was to test the hypothesis that frontages which are compliant with active frontage codes requiring transparent glazed frontages do not necessarily afford lingering activities or other activities which contribute to street-life vitality. Two observation points of standard transparent 'active' frontages that face public streets (Yarra St and Claremont St), rather than the quasi-public Yarra Lane pedestrian link, were selected to ensure vantage points were not located on private property. Further, while the observation methodology employed was not fully concealed (or 'secret') observer, the selected observation locations did provide vantage points that are less visible, and intrusive, than 'recognisable outside observer' (Zeisel 2006). For example, Observation Location 01 in Yarra Street is partially screened by parked cars and street trees, while still allowing clear view-lines to the frontage.

Observations were conducted during the weekday morning pedestrian 'peak hour' (which occurs between 7.30am and 9.30am). A lunchtime 'activity peak' (between 12pm – 2pm) was also identified and provided a second useful sample. Additional observations were conducted on Saturday mornings to provide a comparative sample for a period when the number of school children and office workers within the precinct is significantly reduced, and the number of residents increases. Following testing, observation times were programmed to include different days of the week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday), both morning peak-hour and lunchtime periods, and across the seasons. Days with heavy rainfall were avoided as adverse weather conditions made recording difficult and impacted on activities. Observations were also programmed to avoid school holiday periods, as this has a noticeable impact on pedestrian flows and activity levels within the case study precinct. A total of twenty-three behaviour observation and mapping sessions were conducted between July 2018 and February 2019.

The following participant ('actor') behaviour patterns and activities were observed, counted and mapped during timed 10-minute observation periods (refer figure 5.4 for an example of the site recording notation), supplemented by photographing typical, and/or unusual, behaviours. The recorded data, and its purpose, is as follows:

- pedestrian *numbers* (to confirm sufficient concentration to provide useful data) *and route direction* (to understand rhythms and flows)
- number of people *entering and exiting* buildings (to understand different types of activity associated with the frontage)
- pedestrian *diversity* (another key attribute of street-life vitality). After test observations, the following categories of pedestrian were identified and counted: schoolchildren; commuter/office workers; tradespersons/construction workers; delivery persons; gym attendees/exercisers; people with prams; and dog walkers. Those with differing abilities

accord with the assumed original design intent or purpose. For example, the *intended* 'conventional' affordances offered by a glazed retail shopfront include the display of goods or services for sale to passers-by; vitality through interactions between the public and private realms; and security, through passive surveillance. 'Unconventional' affordances demonstrate alternative uses or activities at the public/private interface. As the focus of this study is to understand affordances relating to different frontage types impacting street-level behaviours and sensory perceptions, the affordances recorded were actualised within the public realm, not interior frontage transformations by the building occupants. Unconventional affordances were directly observed, or identified through physical trace analysis (Zeisel 2006), and photographed during approximately forty walk-throughs of around 60-minutes duration, on weekdays and Saturdays. The affordance types and locations were then plotted onto the frontage typology base map to allow analysis of correlations between observed affordances and frontage types.

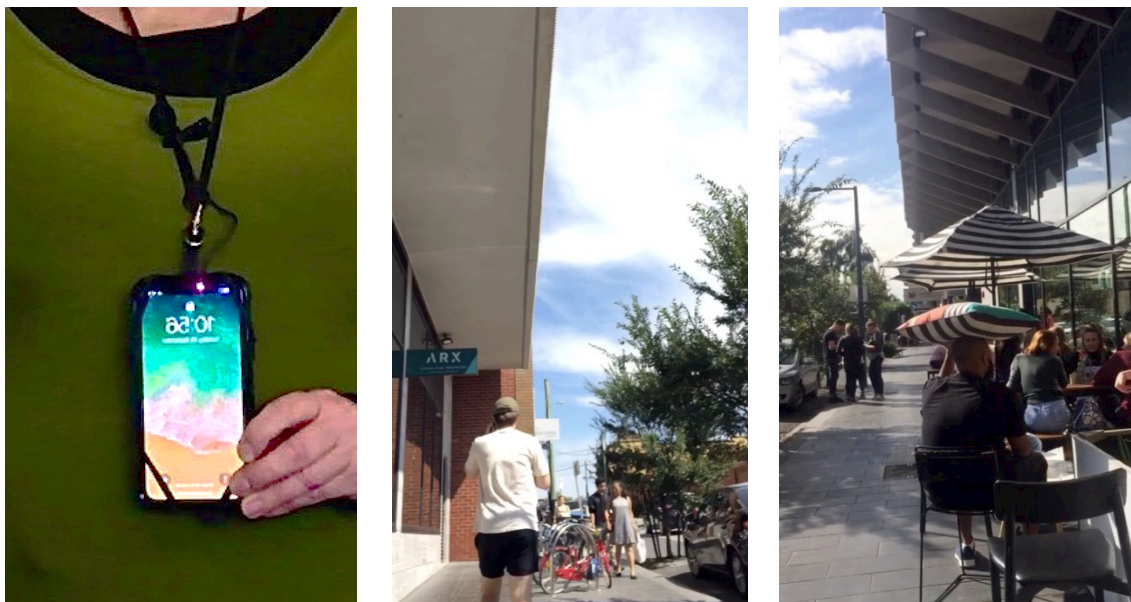
Sensory affordance walk-alongs

The purpose of the walk-alongs was to explore sensory and emotional responses, and perceptions of urban quality, to investigate sensory affordances, or atmospheres. Existing sensory ethnography methods were investigated and a 'hybrid' method developed, combining the 'go-along' or 'walk-along' method, where participants are asked to comment on anything they find noteworthy as they are accompanied by the researcher (Kusenbach 2003; Degen and Rose 2012), with video/audio recording methods (Pink 2014, 2015). The technique developed differs from Pink's video ethnography method, where the researcher controls the camera and makes the visual and audio recordings while the participants go about their usual daily routines. Instead, in this research the participant wears a 'smartphone' on a lanyard and makes the recording themselves (figure 5.5). I propose that allowing the participant to 'take charge' of their own recording may assist in reducing interviewer bias, and provide a more authentic representation of their experience during the research event.

Walk-alongs were conducted with three 'experts' (planner/urban designer, architects) and three 'laypeople', to provide diversity of background knowledge and awareness of urban conditions and sample a range of perceptions. A diversity of gender, age and ancestry/cultural background was sought. Participants were visitors to the case study precinct; while it would be useful to have a 'local' perspective from residents or those working in the area, familiarity can also 'dull' observations. Experiencing an area with the 'fresh eyes' of an 'outsider' provides valuable insights, albeit different from those provided by 'insiders'. Participants are known to me as colleagues and/or friends, which may influence responses; conversely, participants may be more comfortable in expressing thoughts and opinions than they would with a stranger. As noted above, the method employed was accompanied 'walk-alongs', with participants making a video

and audio recording of their 'impressions' and sensory/emotional responses using a smartphone. Walk-alongs were programmed to avoid school holidays (when pedestrian activity within the case study precinct is reduced), to suit participant availability, and to avoid very hot or rainy days. A short (5-minute to 10-minute) verbal briefing was provided, including:

- a concise explanation of the project
- a brief preliminary chat to determine if the participant had any pre-existing knowledge or familiarity with the case study site that might impact on their responses during the research event i.e. have they visited the study area before? how frequently, and why?
- an introduction to the concept of 'atmosphere' i.e. the idea that atmosphere is 'hard to put your finger on' but essentially it is how a space 'feels', and is often based on a spontaneous emotional response or intensity of mood.
- a concise list of 'prompt' questions, and an example of a sensory experience. The goal was not to 'direct' responses, but to provide some guidance. A script for the prompt questions was included in the Plain Language Statement provided to participants prior to the site visit. In brief, participants were asked to provide a verbal commentary as they walked about any noticeable sensory connections (positive or negative) they felt were contributing to the 'atmosphere', and the 'quality' of their experience. They were also asked to orient the camera to capture any specific visual moments that might help illustrate their sensory connections to the space.



Left: 'Smartphone' and microphone on lanyard. Centre, right: frames from video recordings

Figure 5.5 Sensory walk-along recording method

Following the initial briefing, I walked along a set-route through the case study area with each participant (figure 5.6). The duration of each walk-along varied slightly, ranging from

approximately 25-minutes to 40-minutes. The participant made the audio/visual recording¹³ of their thoughts and ‘impressions’. I recorded additional supporting notes immediately after the completion of the fieldwork.

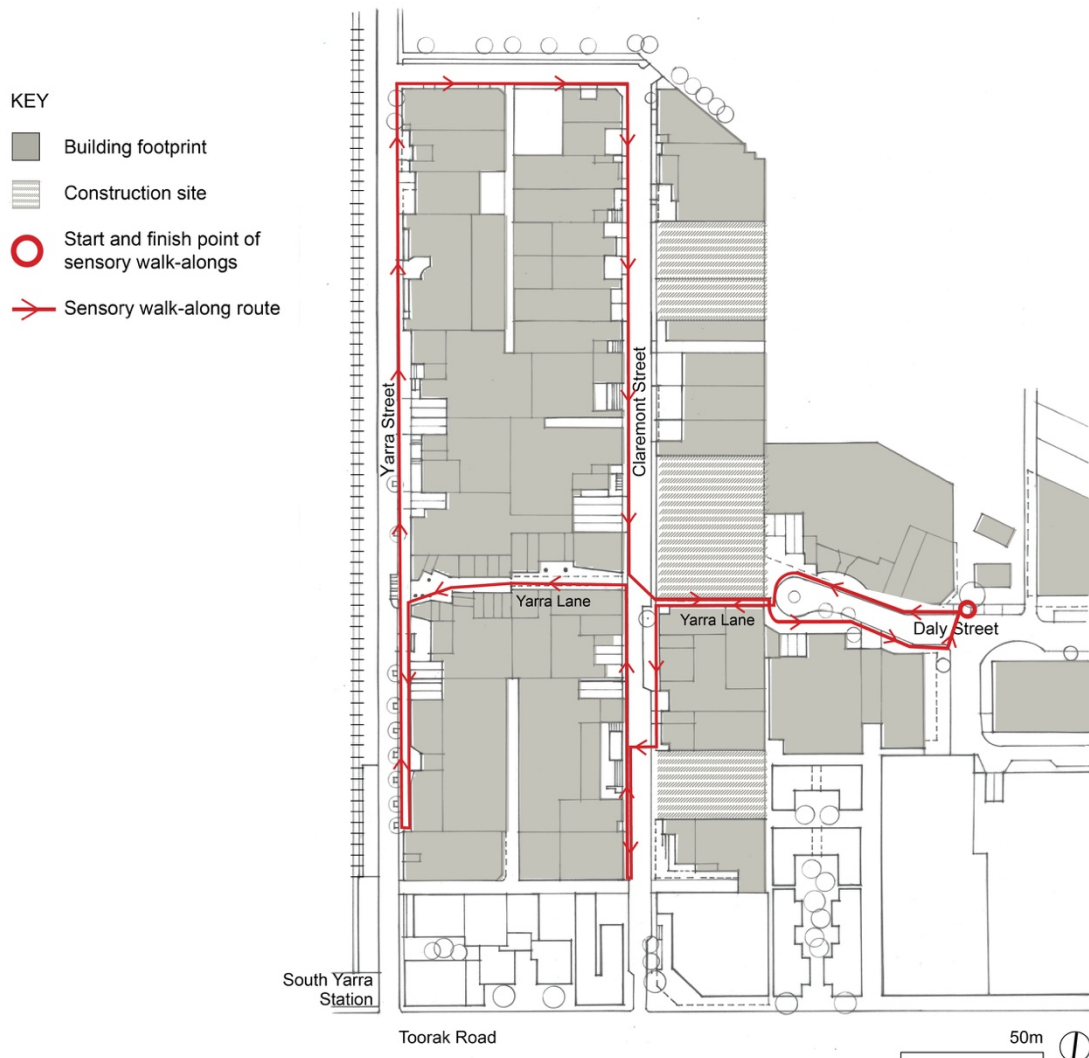


Figure 5.6 Set-route adopted for the accompanied sensory walk-alongs

The walk-along videos, and transcripts of the audio recordings, were analysed for insights into how the built environment outcomes influenced the perceptions of urban ‘quality’ and atmosphere. For example, responses specifically referencing frontage designs, and perceptions of ‘atmosphere’ within the precinct. The responses were then plotted onto the frontage typology map to reveal possible relationships between frontage types and sensory affordances. This

¹³ Wearing the recording device on a neck lanyard may be less distracting than a hand-held device – both for the research participant and for other pedestrians in the field of view. The participant was asked to steady the smartphone with one hand while walking, to stop it swinging. The Instagram Hyperlapse video app (replayed at 1x speed) was used to smooth out jerky movement in the recording.

method was possible due to the small number of participants, and the repetition of a set-route which made it easy to manually transpose the data onto the map. For more complex and less structured walk-along routes, a method where audio/video files are geo-tagged and plotted on the map might be considered (Martini 2017).

Fieldwork outputs

The output generated from the case study fieldwork data (both quantitative and qualitative) is a form of 'post-occupancy' evaluation of the effectiveness of the active frontage codes in affording the diversity of use and users and sensory experience required to support street-life vitality. To be clear, the fieldwork empirically captured observed 'actualised' affordances, and can only provide a 'snapshot' of potentialities.

5.2 Exemplar investigation

The second part of the study turns to the research questions:

What street-edge morphology, and/or function, might be more effective than prescribed transparent retail frontages in affording street-life vitality?

and

What urban design strategies and tactics could afford these alternative street-level interfaces?

To explore these questions, lessons learnt from the literature review and the Forrest Hill case study research completed in the first phases of the study were applied in a reflective re-thinking of current practice. The research approach employed the following methods:

Reference exemplar investigation

An aim of this method is to investigate reference global exemplars of innovative street-level interface design and/or function which may afford a diversity of users and use, and sensory experience, thereby supporting street-life vitality. The purpose is not to create a 'pattern book' of ideal types, because, as Bobić (2004) and Dovey (2016) observe, this can contribute to the homogeneity and over-determinism that this study seeks to avoid. However, looking to exemplars can be instructive in honing assessment criteria by providing a scale of reference or benchmarking, and fostering creativity through analogical thinking. Looking to other socio-cultural practices, as suggested by Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014, p.350), may unlock '*unconventional but relevant affordances*'.

Initially I sought exemplar projects where existing urban research provided data demonstrating links between alternative, non-standard frontage designs and street-life vitality. However this specific data could not be located, and it was beyond the scope and resources of this research

to conduct this investigation. Therefore the exemplar selection and appraisal part of this thesis employs abductive reasoning (rather than inductive or deductive) to interrogate the working hypothesis. The term ‘abduction’ was coined by Charles S. Peirce in his work on logic within the scientific disciplines. Peirce (1903, p.216), linked abduction to the creative generation of explanatory hypotheses, providing the following summary of the key differences between deduction, induction, and abduction:

Deduction proves that something *must* be; induction shows that something *actually is operative*; abduction merely suggests that something *may* be’ (original emphasis).

McAuliffe (2015, pp.301-302) elaborates, stating that according to Peirce: ‘Unlike induction, abduction does not infer the truth of a hypothesis, but rather poses it as a question’. In other words, a set of observations leads to questioning, followed by informed speculation about possible explanations.

Abductive logic, or thinking, is considered by some design research scholars to be the fundamental reasoning framework employed in design processes. Dorst (2011) explains, in abductive thinking the formula ‘*what*’ plus ‘*how*’ leads to ‘*value*’, where the target value is known but not the ‘*what*’ (or, sometimes, neither the ‘*what*’ nor the ‘*how*’). This research investigates the hypothesis that there are forms of non-standard frontage designs (the ‘*what*’) that maximise affordances supporting a diversity of use, users and sensory perceptions (the ‘*how*’), leading to street-life vitality (the ‘*value*’). The exemplar investigation speculates (informed by the outcomes of the Forrest Hill case study research and my previous experience in architecture practice), about ways in which the selected alternative frontage design strategies *may* maximise affordances, and provide insights into other possibilities for the design of street-level interfaces.



3/7 Claremont St, Forrest Hill



7 Yarra St, Forrest Hill

Figure 5.7 Typical transparent ‘active’ frontages in the Forrest Hill case study area

The process began with a review of ‘standard’ glazed retail shopfronts that conform with active frontage codes; for example, those found within the Forrest Hill case study area (figure 5.7).

These frontages, typically, are linear and 'flat', with fixed panels of transparent glass, often (but not always) extending to footpath level. Framing materials are 'off-the-shelf' commercial aluminium glazing sections, with either a clear anodised or coloured powder-coat finish.

Criteria for the selection of global exemplars for non-standard street-level interfaces included:

- primarily, frontages that *would not conform to active frontage codes* (i.e. those codes requiring a minimum 60% - 80% of façade to be clear transparent glazing), and which offer non-standard strategies.
- *non-retail use* premises. Examples of shops, cafés, and bars with innovative, non-standard frontage designs are easy to locate, as these tenancies invest in quality 'signature' designs and fitouts to attract customers. However, a key premise of this research is that shops, cafes and bars may not always be sustainable in secondary streets, peripheral to main shopping strips. Therefore the exemplar investigation looks to non-retail/cafe uses, including other types of commercial, institutional, and residential frontages, as potentially providing useful insights.
- *contemporary* exemplars of alternative or non-standard street level uses and facade design. While important lessons can be learnt from studying historical antecedents in the built environment, the goal is to avoid direct replication or pastiche. Of interest to this research are contemporary projects that may engage with the past, then apply the insights gained in new and creative ways.

The selected non-standard exemplar projects were analysed, with speculation regarding potential affordances focussing on the following key themes:

- *interior morphology/design*, i.e. building structure, internal partitioning, location of building services and circulation; and
- *frontage morphology/design*, including the transition, or edge, zone between the public realm and the building interior i.e. facade structure, form, materials, construction details, location and detailing of external building services.

Relevant urban codes impacting on diversity of street-level building uses and frontage morphology are also noted, when this information could be readily sourced.

Exemplar investigation outputs

The 'lessons learnt' from the exemplar analysis were collated, and informed a set of urban design strategies and tactics, aiming to maximise affordances supporting diversity of use and users and sensory affordances, supported by a series of design principles for street-level frontage design.

5.3 Limitations of methods

The focus of this research is limited to studying the impacts of active frontage codes on street-life vitality. There are many other factors which influence street-life vitality; for example, economic and real-estate market forces. However, this thesis is an urban design study, and analysis of these other influences is beyond the scope of this research. Other limitations of the research approach and methods include:

Limitations of the case study fieldwork methods

The limitations of a single case study have already been identified; however (see section 5.1), the single case has provided the opportunity to test the methodology, and has the potential to be an exploratory pilot study for future comparative research, with ‘fine-tuned’ methods, in other similar precincts undergoing significant change. Limitations of the case study fieldwork include:

- *An evolving urban context*

The case study precinct was selected because it is an emergent area (to capture recent development), which also means that the urban form and population density are still evolving. During the research period (2017 to 2019) there has been redevelopment of several sites along the Chapel Street boundary of the study area, including two towers at the Capitol Grand site on the corner of Chapel St and Toorak Rd (10-storeys and 50-storeys, 400 apartments). At the time the fieldwork was being completed there were three projects under construction in Claremont St, including the Yarra One development at 16 - 22 Claremont St (27-storeys, 268 apartments), and planning permit applications lodged or approved for a further five sites. When completed and occupied these projects will impact on the street-level public realm with altered ground floor frontages, increased pedestrian and vehicle densities, and climatic variations such as increased overshadowing and wind effects. The construction works also affected the sensory walk-alongs, with construction noise and dust, temporary footpath closures etc. impacting on sensorial experience.

- *Limited observation locations, periods and data collected, and timing of observations*

Due to safety issues associated with a sole researcher, observations (other than drive-throughs and accompanied walk-throughs) were limited to daylight hours. Limited resources (time/labour) restricted the sample of observation locations, and the physical limitations of a sole observer limited counting periods to 10-minutes in duration and restricted the categories of pedestrian data collected i.e. gender and pedestrian type were noted, but age (apart from school children) and cultural background were not recorded. Further, outside factors impacted on pedestrian flows. For example, morning observation times coinciding with train arrivals at South Yarra Station recorded more pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren. The fieldwork methods could be further developed, with a wider sample of observation locations and collected data, in future investigations.

- *Observer bias and limited observation technology*

Observations of behaviours at street-level interfaces, including passers-by who looked towards the street-level frontage, were manually recorded by a single observer at two observation locations. The limitations include potential researcher bias (Kusenbach 2003), and the physical limitations of a sole researcher manually recording observed behaviours. For example, at the morning peak, when the volume of passers-by sometimes exceeded 28 per minute, and included 'bunched up' groups, it is possible that some instances of 'head turning' towards the frontage were missed. Recent studies have employed more sophisticated methods to record visual engagement with the street-level interface, by using eye-tracking glasses (Simpson et al. 2019). However, while potentially reducing observer bias and providing useful insights into urban edge engagement, this method also has limitations as it is restricted to selected participants wearing the equipment and moving through the research area while undertaking necessary tasks; therefore, while useful, it does not provide the broader overview of behaviours possible through observation.

- *Emergent and transient nature of affordances*

Engagements with affordances are often fleeting, and actualised affordances are only directly observed by chance, or when they leave trace evidence. Therefore, the affordances empirically recorded can only offer a 'snapshot' of potentialities. One of the aims of the multi-method approach, and the inclusion of walk-along interviews, was to capture affordances that are not 'visible' through observation, to afford the 'snapshot' an amplified 'depth of field'.

- *Researcher and other influencing factors in accompanied sensory affordance walk-alongs*

Although the 'self-recording' method aims to minimise 'interviewer' bias, the fact that the researcher is sharing the walk-along experience with the participant must influence, to a degree, the participant's responses. In addition, the participant's cultural background, age, personality, physical abilities, past experiences and embodied memories all contribute to their sensory perceptions. Therefore, the sensory walk-along method employed provides a somewhat limited tool for multi-sensory research. Other researchers look to combine qualitative research with quantitative methods to more accurately measure sensory experience of public space. Investigating technologies such as galvanic skin response (measuring changes in skin conductance triggered by emotional stimulation), and EEG (measuring brain waves as an indication of changes in mood), in combination with subjective qualitative methods, they aim to gain a more 'comprehensive understanding of users' experience of different spaces' (Daly et al. 2016, p.8).

- *Limited sample for sensory walk-alongs*

The small sample (six participants) for the sensory walk-along research means that only limited conclusions can be drawn from the collected data. This part of the research method

is still exploratory, and, due in part to the time and resources limitations of an MPhil research study, was ‘tested’ with participants known to the researcher. The methods could be further developed, with a wider and more diverse group of participants, in future investigations.

Limitations of exemplar investigation and re-imagining methods

As previously noted, a limitation of the reference exemplar investigations is the reliance on abductive logic, and the lack of empirical evidence to understand whether the speculated affordances have been actualised, to validate the hypothesis that the alternative strategies demonstrated by the selected exemplars do afford street-life vitality. Further, I have only visited three of the ten exemplars - the remaining seven were investigated using published photographs, descriptions, critiques, and architects’ statements, and non-promotional sources such as Google Streetview and photo-sharing services. These deficiencies could be corrected through future research. However, it is also noted that all design speculation includes conjecture, supposition, and ‘hypothesising’; therefore, the reference exemplar projects investigated can still contribute useful insights for this research.

5.4 Conclusions

In sum, the research investigates causal links between *current active frontage* codes and street-life vitality, and between alternative, *non-standard frontage strategies* and street-life vitality. The linked two-phase, mixed-method research approach, connected within an affordance framework (figure 5.8), provides an effective strategy for understanding both the ‘*what is happening now*’, and the ‘*what if*’.

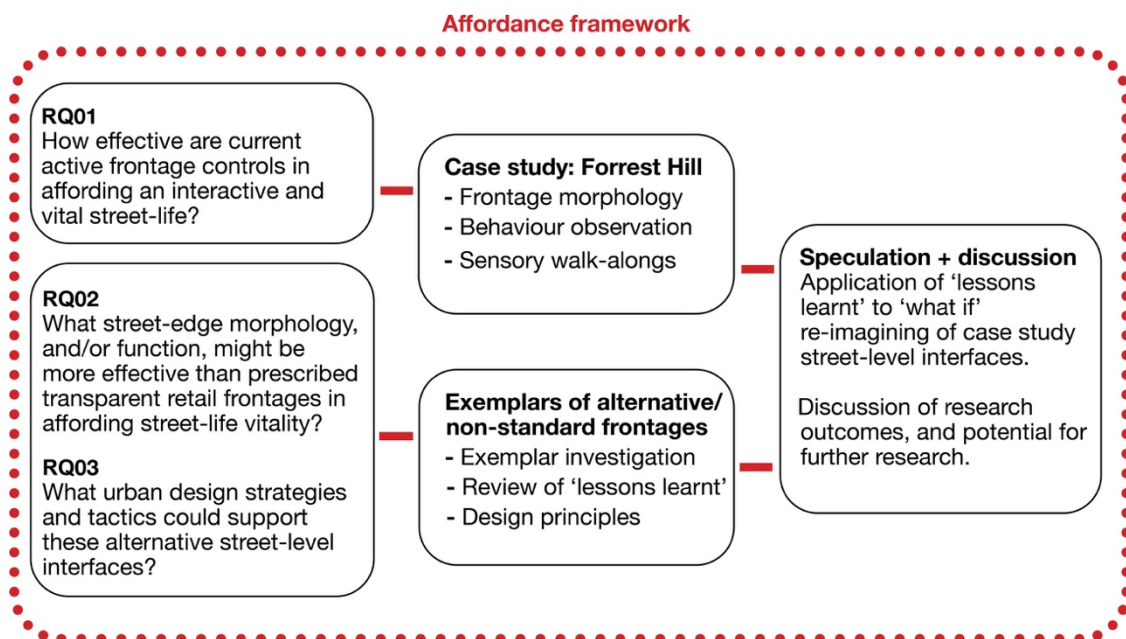


Figure 5.8 Research design

6.0 Forrest Hill case study



Figure 6.1 Forrest Hill case study area

Source: Nearmap. Image dated 17 December 2019

This chapter returns to the first question, **how effective are active frontage codes in affording an interactive and vital street-life?**, by investigating relationships between active frontage codes and affordances supporting vital street-life within the Forrest Hill case study area.

6.1 Study area

Forrest Hill was selected as a case study because it is an emergent precinct with areas of contiguous street-level frontages, required to generate the synergies needed to provide a representative sampling of street-life; it is located on public transport routes (train and tram) which support pedestrian density and social diversity; and it contains a network of secondary streets, rather than being focused along a main shopping strip. It also shares characteristics with other areas of recent mixed-use development, providing opportunities for insights into understanding dynamics in other localities.

The selected case study site is a 2.75-hectare sub-precinct, located on the western boundary of the 8-hectare Forest Hill precinct (figure 6.1). Adjoining South Yarra Railway Station, it includes Yarra and Claremont Streets (running south-north from Toorak Rd); however Toorak Road and Chapel Street are excluded because a focus of this study is to understand the relevance of active frontage codes prescribing transparent shopfronts beyond main retail strips. An east-west pedestrian route links Chapel Street to Yarra Street, via Daly Street and Yarra Lane.



Yarra Street, looking north



Claremont Street, looking north



Daly Street, looking west



Yarra Lane, looking east towards Claremont St

Figure 6.2 Views within Forrest Hill case study area, November 2019

6.2 Background

In the 19c the area was used for clay quarrying and brickworks, which removed much of the higher ground – the hill in Forrest Hill. In the early 20c the precinct was developed with predominately light-industrial uses. In 1928, Melbourne High School (a selective entry state secondary school for boys) was built on the remaining high ground, with sports fields below.

In 2002, the wider Prahran/South Yarra area was identified by the Victoria State Government as a Principal Activity Centre within its 30-year plan *Melbourne 2030: planning for sustainable growth* (State Government of Victoria 2002). A Principal Activity Centre was ‘an area having (either currently or with future potential for) a wide mix of uses; multiple public transport routes; a large catchment over several suburbs and attracting activities that meet metropolitan needs; and the potential to grow and support intensive housing developments without conflicting with surrounding land uses’ (Beca and David Lock Pty Ltds 2005, p.6). Stonnington Council nominated Forrest Hill as an area within the designated Activity Centre which could support urban intensification (ibid., p.6).

Unlike the neighbouring post-industrial suburb of Cremorne, on the north side of the Yarra River, Forrest Hill has no iconic industrial heritage buildings (apart from the heritage listed former South Yarra Tram substation building at 2 Daly St) (figure 6.3). Therefore, Forrest Hill provided a ‘clean slate’ for redevelopment; however, it also lacked the ‘character’ often associated with Melbourne’s inner-ring post-industrial neighbourhoods.



Figure 6.3 Forrest Hill in 2002, prior to the demolition of the Tetley Tea and Pinnacle Yeast factories
Source: Google Earth

Following the closure of the Pinnacle Yeast and Tetley Tea factories in 2002/2003 (figure 6.3), the abutting redundant industrial properties at 5 -11 Yarra St (approximately 7,750 m²) and 12-13 Yarra St (approximately 2,241 m²) were re-zoned. In November 2003 Stonnington Council, recognising the strategic re-development importance of the land, released specific Urban Design Guidelines for the two sites (City of Stonnington 2003). The properties were acquired by a local property developer, who subsequently re-subdivided the land, on-selling part of the land in smaller parcels to other developers. In 2004 planning permit applications were lodged for a number of 6-storey mixed-use buildings in Yarra St and Claremont St (Beca and David Lock Ptys Ltds 2005, p8.).

Since re-development started in the early 2000s, most of the existing low-rise industrial and commercial buildings within the precinct have been demolished and replaced (or are in the process of being replaced) by more than thirty 15 – 50-storey towers accommodating offices, hotels, and residential apartments (figure 6.4). The population of Forrest Hill grew from 151 residents in 2,006 to 4,625 residents in 2016, with an increase to 10,502 residents projected by 2026.¹⁴ The number of commercial office and retail occupants is projected to be 4,400.¹⁵

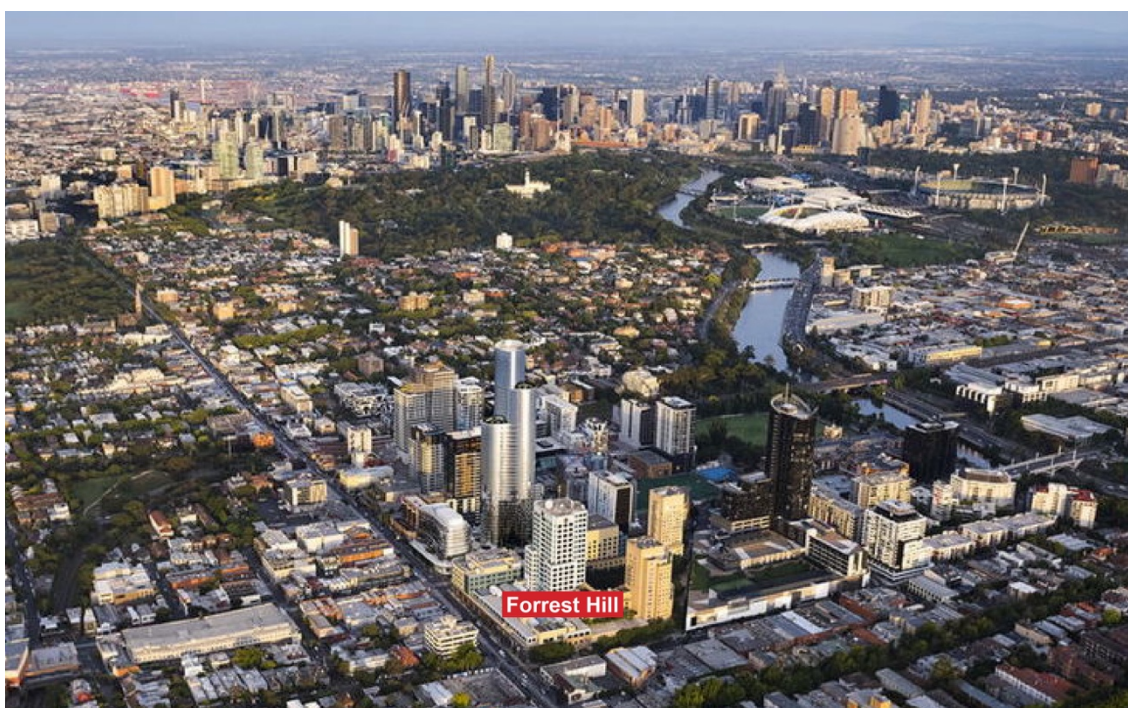


Figure 6.4 Forrest Hill viewed from southeast

Image: © FloodSlicer for the Capitol Grand development marketing material, 2015. Label by author.

¹⁴ 2016 Stonnington Council population forecast: Forrest Hill precinct, .id report, accessed 23 July 2018
https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/5106/101-Stonnington-Council-forecast.pdf

¹⁵ 2011 Urbis and CKC report, quoted in Hopkins 2011

History of active frontage planning codes

The 2003 *Urban Design Guidelines for 5-11 and 12-13 Yarra St South Yarra* provided the first planning and design codes for re-development within the precinct. The vision for the sites included the following elements relevant to the street-level public realm:

Guideline 7.0 Building uses/street frontage activities promoted 'uses that promote pedestrian activity and vibrancy at the ground floor level of Claremont and Yarra Streets and on sites with frontages to laneways', to 'encourage surveillance of the public domain, improve pedestrian safety and to encourage enjoyment of the public domain by the community.' Residential uses on the ground floor of buildings were discouraged *'as they contain private spaces and do not promote a sense of vibrancy at the street frontage level'* (City of Stonnington 2003, pp.27-28).

Although specific 'active frontage' codes were not provided, guidelines for the design of buildings at the street-level interface included:

The lower level of buildings should be designed and articulated to achieve visual interest for pedestrians. This may be achieved by introducing varying materials, colours, textures or differentiation of alignment or by adding decorative features to the façade (ibid., p.33).

Active frontage codes were, however, subsequently incorporated into the 2005 *Forrest Hill Structure Plan* (City of Stonnington 2005). Active frontages were nominated as 'essential defining elements' for the precinct (ibid., p.6). Clause 2.4 *Urban Design Provisions* provides definitions:

- *An active frontage should be predominantly clear-glazed from footpath level to a height of at least 2 metres above footpath level. It should also have pedestrian entries at least every 15 metres* (ibid., p.37).
- *A semi-active frontage should be at least 80% clear-glazed between a height of 1 metre and 2 metres above footpath level. It should also have pedestrian entries at least every 30 metres* (ibid., p.37).

The street wall façade design standards (Clause 2.4.3) state that 80% of frontages of the lots in the southern half of Yarra St and Claremont St should provide '*continuous, visible and active or commercial frontages*'. Where lot frontages are less than 15 metres wide and rear lane access is unavailable, a '*minimum of 50% of the frontage should be active*'. North of the proposed east-west link (the now constructed Yarra Ln) there should be a '*semi-active frontage at ground floor level*' (ibid., p.47).

The 2005 Structure Plan (ibid., p.40) also recognised that building use is a key contributing element:

At ground floor level, the potential degree of ‘activeness’ of a building frontage is determined by its use. Retail and food and drink premises frontages may be highly transparent and even ‘spill out’ onto the footpath with displays of outdoor dining. Office and particularly residential frontages, however, require some level of privacy’.

In 2007, the *Chapel Vision 2007-2031 Structure Plan* was released, providing a ‘guiding strategic framework for future land use and development in the Chapel Street Activity Centre’, including nominating eight sub-precincts within the Forrest Hill neighbourhood (City of Stonnington 2007). The interim Chapel Vision codes included a requirement that ‘All ground floor street frontages should have a continuous active frontage incorporating clear glazing even for properties that have multiple street frontages’. Most recently, the *Chapel re-Vision 2012-2031 Structure Plan* (Amendment C172), adopted by Council in 2014 and gazetted in 2017, provides permanent planning codes for the precinct (City of Stonnington 2017). These codes introduced the Activity Centre Zone (ACZ1), replacing the existing Commercial 1 (CZ1) and Mixed-Use (MUZ) zones within the case study area, and directing built form, height, and preferred land-use outcomes (figure 6.5).



Figure 6.5 Forrest Hill, Precinct 1, Chapel Street Activity Centre. Case study area includes: FH-6,7,and 8. Source: City of Stonnington 2017: Schedule 1 to Clause 37.08 Activity Centre Zone, 5.5-1 Precinct Map.

Chapel Re-vision maintains the requirement for active frontages, and nominates *Public Realm interface guidelines* for all precincts within the Chapel Street Activity Centre (City of Stonnington 2017, pp.10-11):

- *All ground floor street frontages should have a continuous active frontage incorporating clear glazing, even for properties that have multiple street frontages.*
- *Conceal service areas for bin storage and plant machinery from public view.*
- *Integrate larger retail premises frontages with the prevailing rhythm and scale of frontages that exist along the street or 'wrap' the edges with smaller scale built form and/or uses.*
- *Provide a clear line of sight from the street to the interior of each retail premises.*
- *A building with office or other commercial use. should locate customer services and other similar activities that promote pedestrian interest and interaction towards the street frontage.*
- *Locate entrances, doorways, awnings and fenestration to provide a sense of passive surveillance.*
- *Design building facades to engage passing pedestrian traffic.*
- *Ensure that building entrances are visually prominent and provide direct access to pedestrian routes.*
- *Large expanses of blank wall, large services areas, bin storage areas, car parking, roller shutters or continuous garage doors should not be located along ground floor frontages.*
- *Provide continuous and functional weather protection for pedestrians without compromising the existing or future presence of street trees.*
- *Use balconies and active rooftop areas to facilitate passive surveillance of the public realm from upper levels.*
- *Provide seating, shade and opportunities for public use and community interaction in publicly accessible entry forecourts.*
- *In residential developments, provide individual entries to ground floor apartments that abut side streets.*
- *Orientate buildings towards public open space.*
- *Provide an active and attractive interface to existing railway corridors to maximise the safety of any future shared path/bike links as shown on the Precinct Maps to be developed along the corridors.*

In sum, built-form active frontage codes have impacted on street-level frontages within the Forrest Hill case study precinct since the mid 1980s. Land-use (zoning) codes also impact; for example, under the current Activity Centre Zone (ACZ1) a planning permit is required for residential uses below the third floor level, offices with a street-level frontage width greater than 2-metres, and for other non-retail street-level uses such as small manufacturing studios and workshops (City of Stonnington 2017).

6.3 Morphology and mix

Figure 6.6 shows building footprints within the case study area, and public (and ‘quasi-public’) exterior accessible space. For this mapping, the ‘quasi-public realm’ extends over the legal lot boundary in locations that are *physically* accessible i.e. where there are no steps or significant changes of level, or fences, gates or other barriers restricting 24-hour access directly off the footpath. For example, carpark entries, to the line of the carpark door or boom gate are included. Yarra Ln is also classified as quasi-public space as it is private land that provides unrestricted public access.



Figure 6.6 Street-level morphology: building footprints and public realm

Figure 6.7 shows the street-level¹⁶ land-uses (functional mix), grouped into categories of live, work and visit. Use was mapped at the ‘fine grain’ scale of individual tenancies, rather than by building lot, to provide a more nuanced understanding of the co-functioning mix and relationships. While recognising that vertical mix (uses on floors above and below street-level) also contributes to street-level activity and vitality, this research focuses on the street-level public realm; therefore, the land-use mapping and analysis was restricted to the ‘horizontal’. Construction sites, and buildings occupied by construction site offices, were recorded as ‘work’ (although temporary, they are contributing to street-level activity), and apartment and hotel lobbies as ‘live’ (there are no ground-level residences).

¹⁶ Ground floor tenancies with a window set above eye level (from the footpath) are not counted as street-level uses.

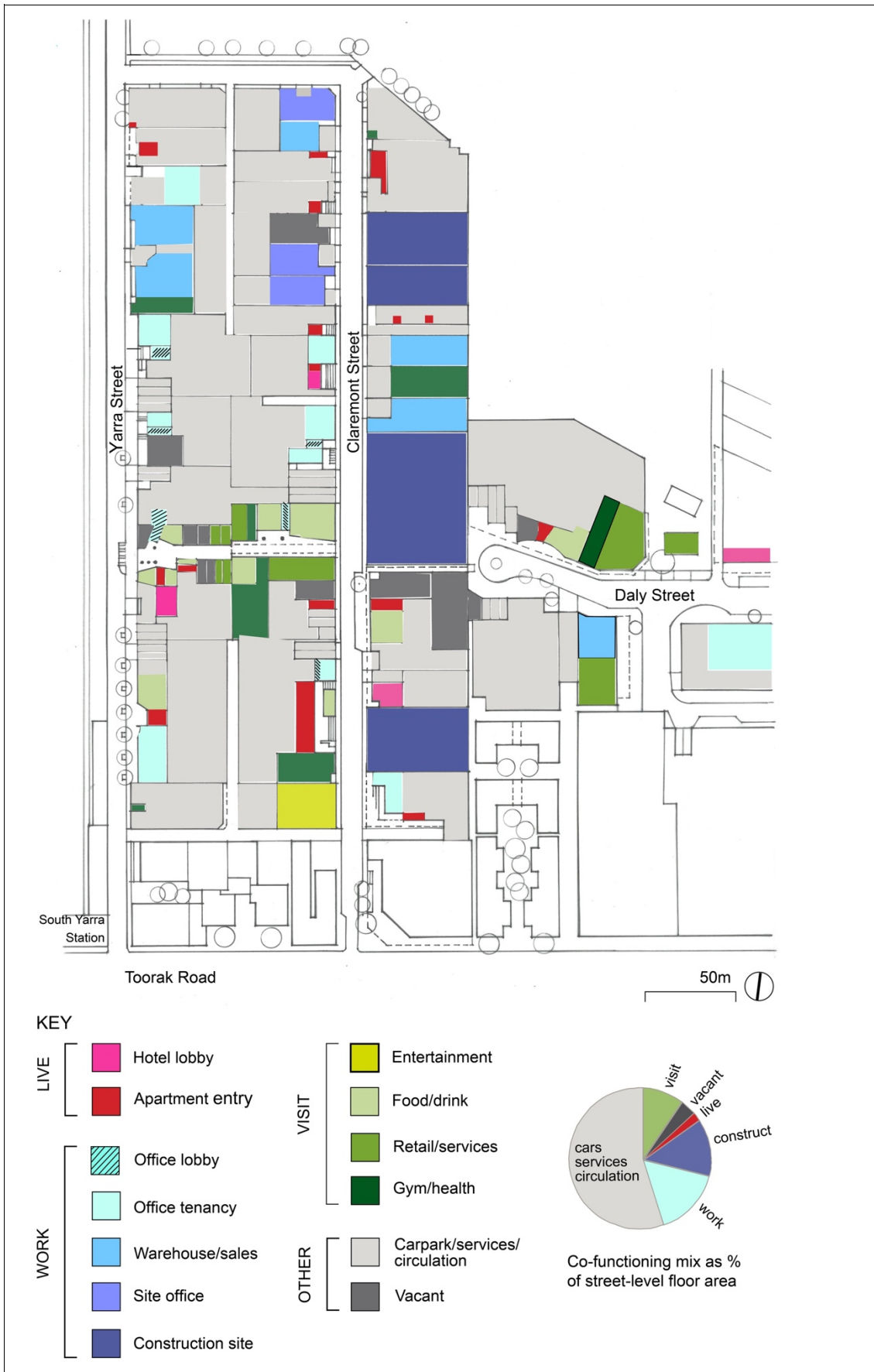


Figure 6.7 Street-level co-functioning mix map

The mapping (figure 6.7) reveals that, typically, there is a thin ‘skin’ of occupied street-level frontage, with circulation, services and carparks behind. This indicates that while the street frontages may ‘appear’ active, they do not always have the floor area required to support a density of ground-floor occupation. Of the 80 ‘spaces’ with ground floor frontage¹⁷, 23 are ‘work’ (29%); 28 ‘visit’ (35%); 17 ‘live’ (21%), and 12 vacant (15%). Of the 56 ‘leasable’ ground floor tenancies¹⁸, at the time of mapping (May 2019) 18 tenancies were ‘work’ (32%); 26 ‘visit’ (47%); and 12 vacant (21%).¹⁹

Figure 6.7 also shows that the tenancy grain size varies. The grain size, at this ‘close-encounter’ scale, is influenced by the individual tenancy frontage and floor area, rather than the lot area. Tenancy frontages (figure 6.8) range in width from 2-metres (office and apartment building entries) to 4-metres (fine-grain, compact shopfronts in Yarra Ln western end), up to 20-metres (coarser grain shopfronts in Yarra Ln (eastern end). Street-level tenancy floor areas range from 27m² (a micro-tenancy food/drink tenancy in the frontage of 7-9 Claremont St) to 400m² (restaurant/bar tenancy at 21 Daly St).



Fine-grain 4m wide shopfronts, Yarra Ln, 7 Yarra St



10m frontage by 2.7m deep, 7-9 Claremont St



12m wide display window, 7 Claremont St



20m wide office frontage, 12 Yarra St

Figure 6.8 Tenancy grain sizes

¹⁷ Including hotel, residential apartment, and office lobbies; lobbies providing direct access to first floor gym/health services; and construction sites and site offices; *excluding* carparking.

¹⁸ *Excluding* lobbies accessing upper levels, and construction sites; *including* site offices.

¹⁹ Although the location of vacant premises has fluctuated during the 2.5 years spent to date visiting the case study area, the overall number of vacancies has remained relatively constant at between 20 - 30%.

The next mapping (figure 6.10) records the public/private interface *types*, and pedestrian and vehicle entry points. The interface types are defined in section 5.1, and illustrated in figure 6.9. An evaluation of the *quality* of the materials and detailing of the street-level frontages and adjacent footpaths is provided (see also section 5.1), and illustrated with examples in figure 6.12.

Street-level interface types

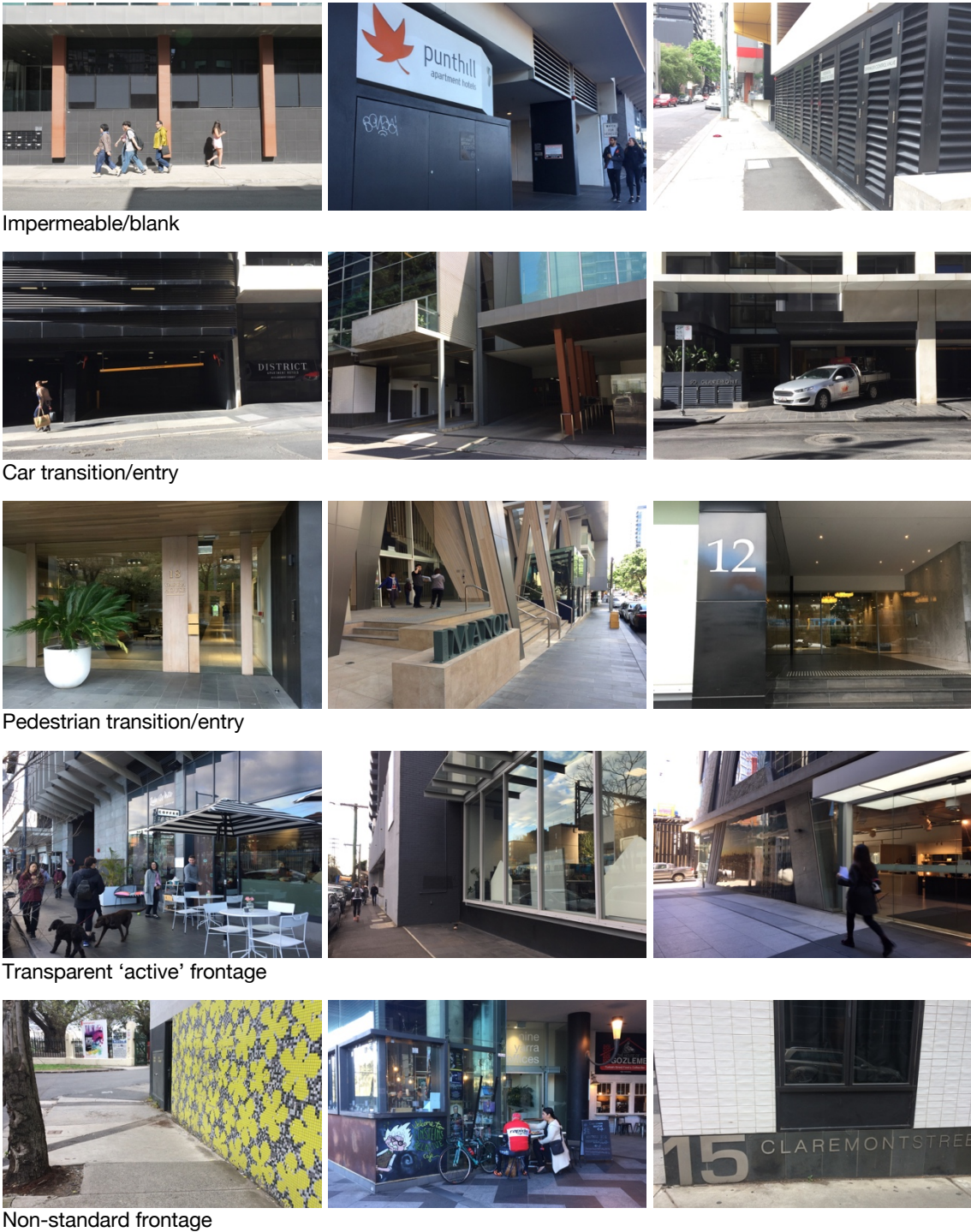


Figure 6.9 Street-level interface types

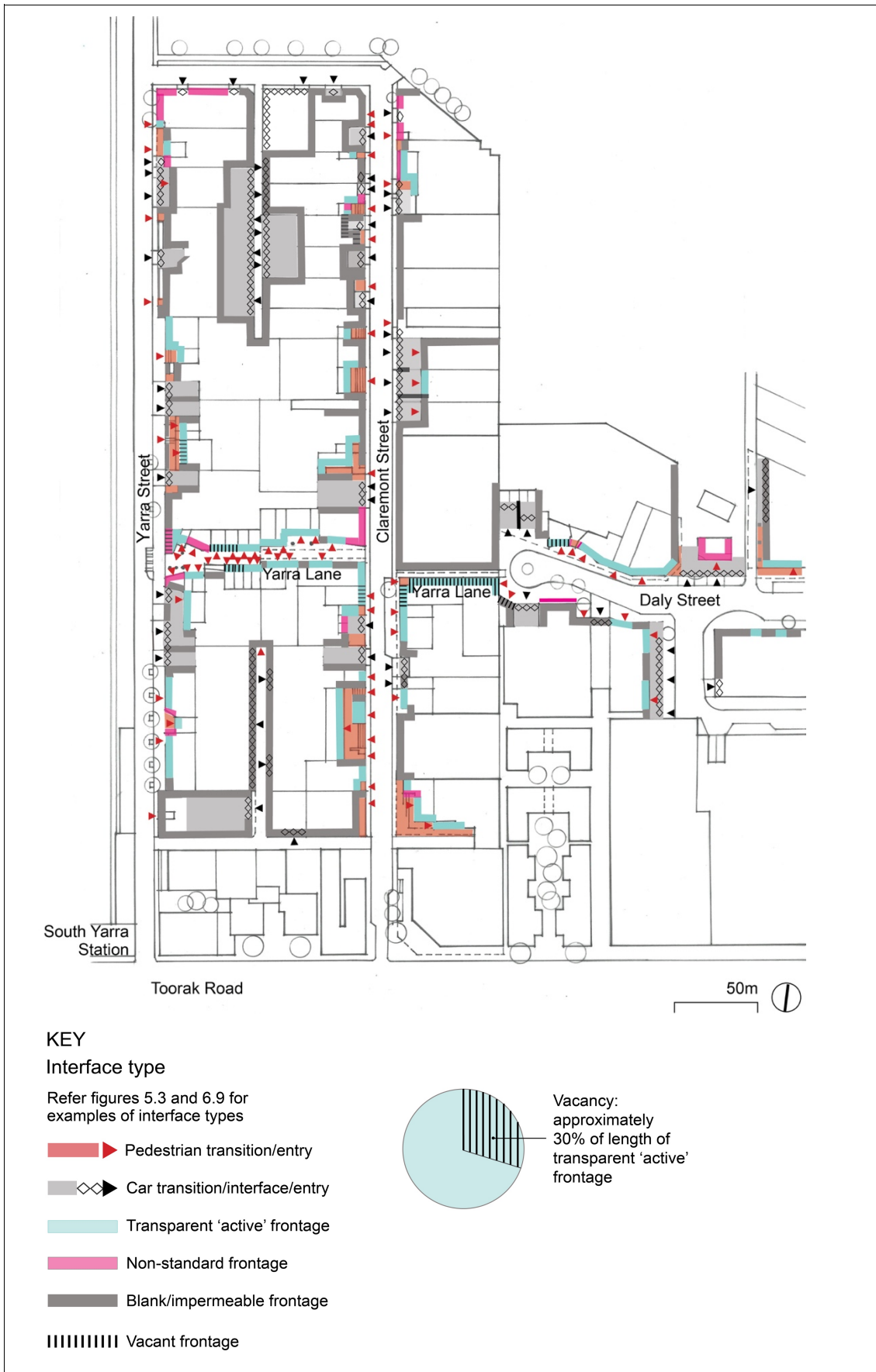


Figure 6.10 Street-level interface types map



Figure 6.11 Street-level interface quality map

Building frontage quality



Better than standard quality



Standard quality



Poor quality

Better than standard quality materials and detailing:

- Quality finishes, which will 'age' well
- Customised and well-considered building detailing
- Interesting textures or facade depths to provide visual relief
- Consistency of materials and detailing

Standard quality materials and detailing:

- Standard finishes, such as painted pre-cast concrete
- Flat surfaces with little visual relief
- Standard aluminium shopfront glazing frames

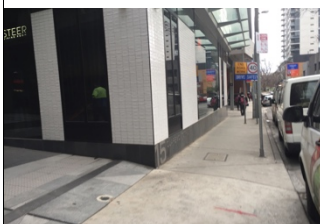
Below standard quality materials and detailing:

- Ordinary materials
- Ill-considered detailing
- Poorly maintained

Footpath quality



Better than standard quality



Standard quality



Poor quality

Better than standard quality footpath:

- Quality paving materials e.g. stone, coloured concrete
- Integrated pattern and cohesive design
- Good level of maintenance/repair

Standard quality footpath:

- Standard municipal concrete paving
- Reasonable level of maintenance/repair

Below standard footpath:

- Asphalt or poor quality concrete
- Broken, poorly patched and/or uneven surface

Figure 6.12 Street-level interface quality evaluation scale

Vacant tenancies were recorded to allow an analysis of relationships between interface type and vacancy. At the time of mapping, 12 (21%) of the 56 leasable ground floor tenancies were vacant. A review of the occupied and vacant transparent 'active' frontages shows a similar proportion of vacancy to the number of unoccupied tenancies, i.e. approximately 84-metres (30%) of the approximately 286-metre length of transparent 'active' frontage within the case study area was vacant at the time of mapping (figure 6.10).

When facade activation codes are applied, occupancy is considered a successful outcome, whereas vacancy is deemed a symptom of failure. There are contributing factors other than frontage design that impact on vacancy levels, including walkable access and economic factors; therefore, only limited conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationship between frontage design and empty shopfronts. However, the high level of retail tenancy vacancy within the case study precinct (approximately 20%, compared to 6.5% in Toorak Rd)²⁰ does support the hypothesis that frontage activation codes requiring extensive glazed shopfronts do not guarantee successful outcomes, particularly in secondary streets away from main shopping strips.

The mapping revealed a shorter length of the non-standard type of interface, i.e. approximately 60-metres in total. This type occurred at five leasable tenancies, one of which was vacant at the time of mapping (Shop 1, 9 Yarra St).²¹ Non-standard interfaces also occurred in three other locations, i.e. the mosaic tiled wall to the carpark at 56 Claremont St, services/integrated planter with window above to the residential entry lobby at 50-54 Claremont St, and mirrored walls at the entry of the residential apartments at 6-8 Daly St. This sample is too small to allow any conclusions to be drawn regarding the relationship between non-standard frontages and vacancy within the case study area.

Figure 6.11 maps the quality of materials and details, including the level of disrepair, within the street-level public realm in the case study area, using a simple evaluation scale (figure 6.12). Elements assessed include the street-level building frontage, and the footpath/sidewalk in front of the building. The perceived quality of materials and detailing can be linked to the concept of 'atmosphere' (see also section 4.2). The purpose of this mapping is to allow analysis of links between users' perceptions of the atmosphere of the public realm (expressed and recorded during the sensory walk-alongs), and the street-level physical environment (see section 6.5 for the outcomes of this analysis).

²⁰ 2018 data, *Walk the strip – volume 2*, accessed 03 May 2019 <<https://www.fitzroys.com.au/walk-the-strip/volume-2>>

²¹ Mapping was completed May 2019. In November 2019, this property had been re-tenanted.

6.4 Behaviours and affordances

Having established the existing morphological and functional mix framework for the case study area, the second part of the fieldwork studied street-level behaviours within that framework; specifically, observations of behaviours at two selected viewing points located next to transparent ‘active’ frontages, and observations of unconventional affordances throughout the case study area.

Street-level behaviours

Figure 6.13 shows the location of the two selected behaviour observation points, positioned to allow viewlines of behaviours on the pavement outside transparent ‘active’ frontages.



Figure 6.13 Location of behaviour observation points

During the 10-minute observation periods, both observation locations had relatively high pedestrian densities during the morning peak hour i.e. at Observation Location 01 an average of 280 pedestrians were recorded in 10-minutes, which extrapolates to 7 people per minute per metre on the 4-metre wide section of footpath (figure 6.14 left), rising to 14 people per minute per metre where the footpath width narrows to 2-metres at the south end of the Location 01

frontage (figure 6.14 right).²² Lower pedestrian densities were observed at other times i.e. an average of 2 people per minute per metre on the 4-metre wide footpath during the weekday lunchtime, and 1.5 people per minute per metre on Saturday mornings.



Pedestrian flow at 4-metre wide section of footpath

Pedestrian flow at 2-metre wide section of footpath

Figure 6.14 Pedestrian densities in the vicinity of Observation Location 01, 2 Yarra Street

Pedestrians were observed looking towards the street-level interface at Observation Location 01 (2 Yarra St), an office with three fixed glass ‘shopfront’ windows, occupied by an engineering firm (figure 6.15). During the weekday morning observation period an average of 6% of passing pedestrians turned to look towards the shopfront windows; at lunch time the number increased to 14.3%. A possible explanation for this increase is that in the mornings people are hurrying to and from the train, whereas they have more time to be ‘distracted’ in their lunch break. It must also be noted that it is also possible that the lower pedestrian density at lunchtime may have allowed a more accurate counting of this activity.

Although some people seemed interested in the window opening to the kitchenette, it was observed that many of the people turning towards the shopfronts appeared to be using the reflective surface of the glass as a mirror, sometimes adjusting hair or clothing as they passed. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that two windows are partially or fully obscured by internal dark-coloured blinds (figure 6.16).

²² Gehl Architects have determined from public life studies conducted in several cities that a comfortable pedestrian movement is 12 people per minute per metre of footpath (Gehl 2010, p.123).



Frontage, office tenancy, 2 Yarra St. Source: Google Streetview



Looking south, lunch time



Looking north, morning peak-hour

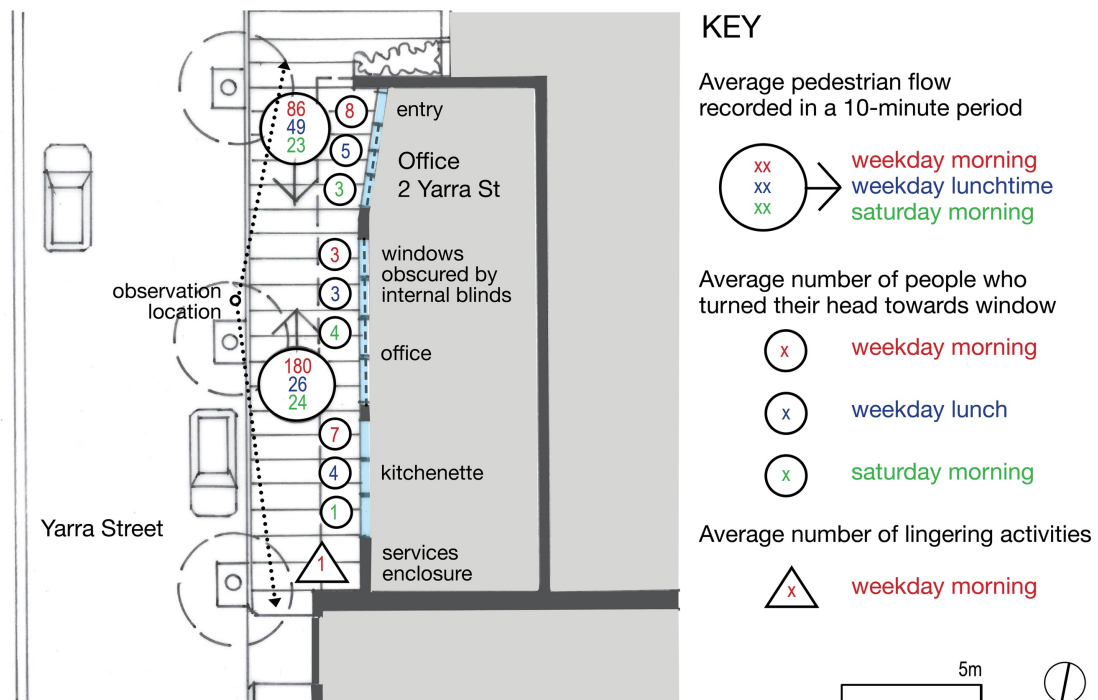


Figure 6.15 Observed behaviours at Location 01, 2 Yarra St



Turning head towards kitchenette window



Turning head towards window obscured by internal blind



Lingering activities

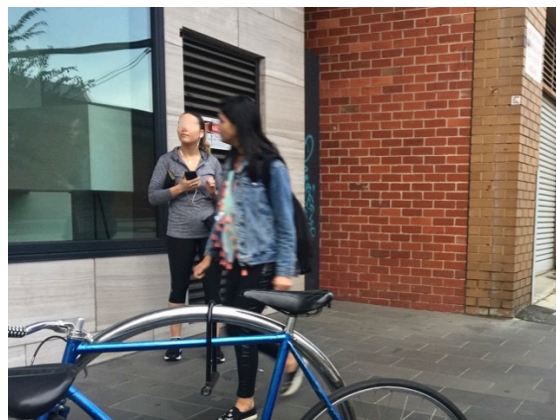


Figure 6.16 Observed behaviours at Location 01, 2 Yarra St

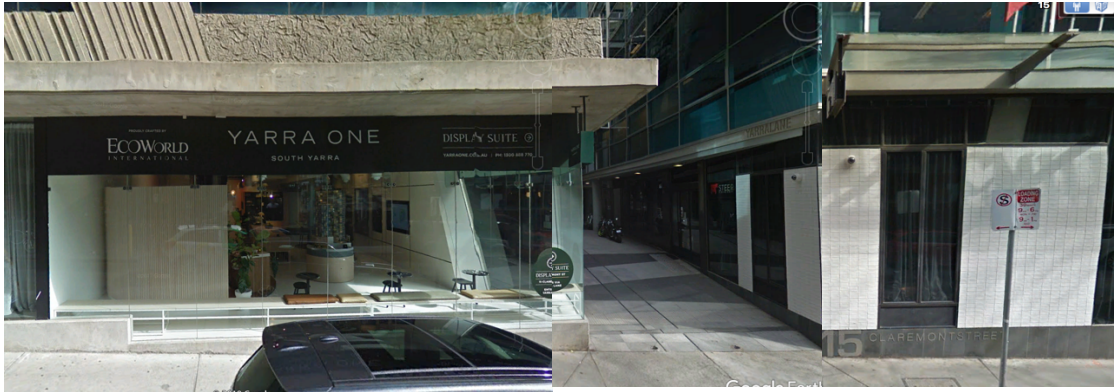
A small number of people were seen entering the tenancy at Observation Location 01 during the morning observation period, and exiting at lunchtime. Lingering activities recorded were solo stationary activities (talking on mobile/cell phone, smoking, waiting with a suitcase). These activities predominately occurred in front of the central obscured window, or at the south end of the frontage (in front of the blank interface provided by the services cupboards, where the pedestrian flow is moving away from the frontage), rather than in front of the three glazed shopfronts (figure 6.16).

The building frontage at Observation Location 02, 9 Claremont St (figure 6.17) has a fixed glass shopfront window to Claremont St; two shopfront windows (currently obscured with advertising material) and an entry occupy the second frontage to the Yarra Ln pedestrian link. The tenancy is occupied by the retail display and marketing suite for the Yarra One Development.

During the observation periods, very few people were seen turning their head to look through the Claremont St or Yarra Ln windows, and only one person was observed stopping to look at the display material in the Claremont St window. The lack of interest in the shopfronts to the Yarra One display suite may be explained, in part, by the fact that it has been open for some time, and does not present a changing 'offer'. It is also likely that the display provides a 'destination' service for those seeking information about the specific real estate product, rather than affording leisurely browsing for most passers-by. Only one lingering activity was observed during the observation periods, when a passer-by stopped to look through the window to the real-estate marketing suite; however, people were observed at other times pausing outside the 'blanked out' windows to talk on their mobile/cell phones.

It is recognised that pedestrian flows are currently impacted by the on-going construction works in Claremont St, and the associated intermittent road and footpath closures and diversions. Construction noise may also be impacting on lingering activities in Claremont St; for example, during the sensory walk-alongs the construction noise occasionally interrupted conversation. However, Yarra St is not directly affected by these disruptions.

Overall, the behaviour observations at the two selected observation points indicated that the transparent 'active' frontages studied did not afford, or support, lingering activities that might contribute to daytime street-life vitality.



Elevation retail tenancy, 9 Claremont St. Source: Google Streetview



Looking north, morning peak-hour



Looking west, lunchtime

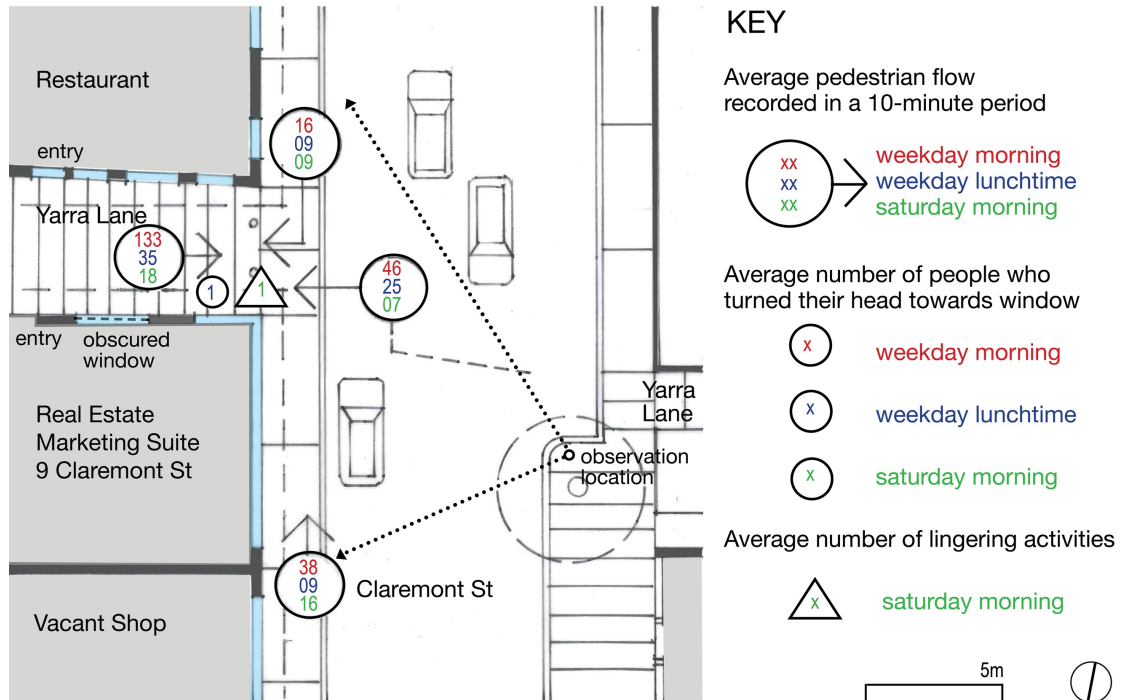


Figure 6.17 Observed behaviours at Location 02, 9 Claremont St

Unconventional affordances

Testing the hypothesis that frontages that are compliant with active frontage codes do not always support or sustain street-life vitality, the goal was to observe and record unconventional affordances (figure 6.18), and identify links between unconventional affordances and frontage types. Unconventional affordances were photographed through direct observation or trace evidence.



Signage as photo prop, 7- 9 Claremont St



Signage as informal seat, 7- 9 Claremont St

Figure 6.18 Examples of observed unconventional affordances

Following analysis of the recorded unconventional affordances, nine broad categories were identified (figure 6.19) and then then mapped in relation to the frontage types and quality evaluation (figures 6.20, 6.21). Many observed unconventional affordances were likely triggered by an existing 'lack' in the built environment, rather than presenting innovative strategies or tactics. For example, it could be assumed that built environment elements (including steps, walls, etc.) afford informal seating and other lingering activities (such as eating and drinking) because, in part, there is a lack of public realm seating i.e. there is no public seating in Yarra St or Claremont St, and the only public seating in the Yarra Ln arcade is located within the undercroft section where the reduced natural light and lack of sunlight may make it less appealing.

Affordances are fleeting and transitory, and therefore those observed provide a limited sample of what may potentially be occurring. However, although limited in scope, this fieldwork does provide useful insights i.e. very few of the recorded unconventional physical affordances that involved lingering or stationary activities were observed in locations associated with transparent 'active' 'shopfront' frontages. As demonstrated in the mapping (figure 6.20), most occurred next to blank walls or non-standard frontages; for example, friends taking 'selfies' against the mosaic tiled wall at 56 Claremont St (see Group Activity figure 6.19), or in recesses and set-backs providing access to off-street car-parking and services (see Solo Activity figure 6.19).

Unconventional affordance types



A. Art (informal)/graffiti



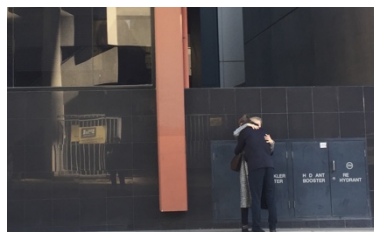
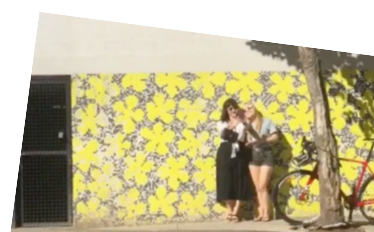
B. Bike parking (informal)



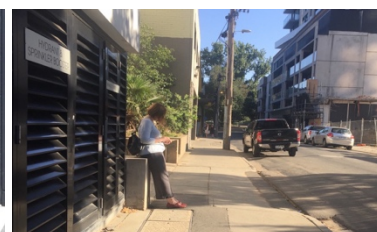
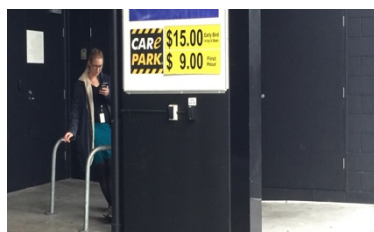
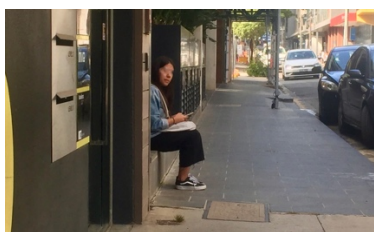
C. Commercial appropriation (informal)



D. Discarded items

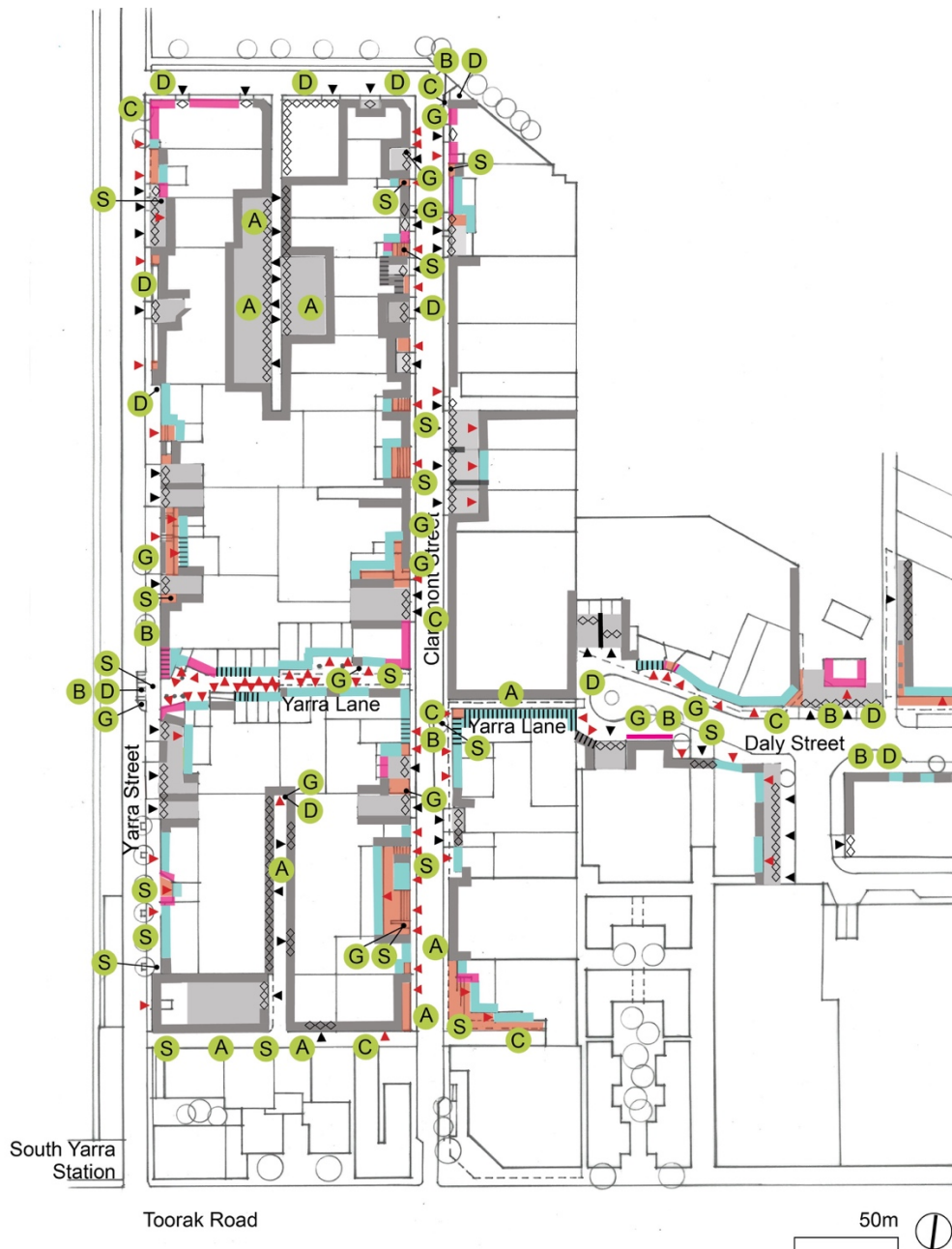


G. Group activity



S. Solo activity

Figure 6.19 Unconventional affordance types



KEY

Interface type

Refer figures 5.3 and 6.9 for examples of interface types

- ▶ Pedestrian transition/entry
- ◊▶ Car transition/interface/entry
- ▬ Transparent 'active' frontage
- ▬ Non-standard frontage
- ▬ Impermeable/blank frontage
- ||||| Vacant frontage

Unconventional affordances

Refer figure 6.19 for examples of unconventional affordance types

- A Art (informal) + graffiti
- B Bike parking (informal)
- C Commercial (informal)
- D Discarded item
- G Group activity
- S Solo activity

Figure 6.20 Location of observed unconventional affordances in relation to interface types

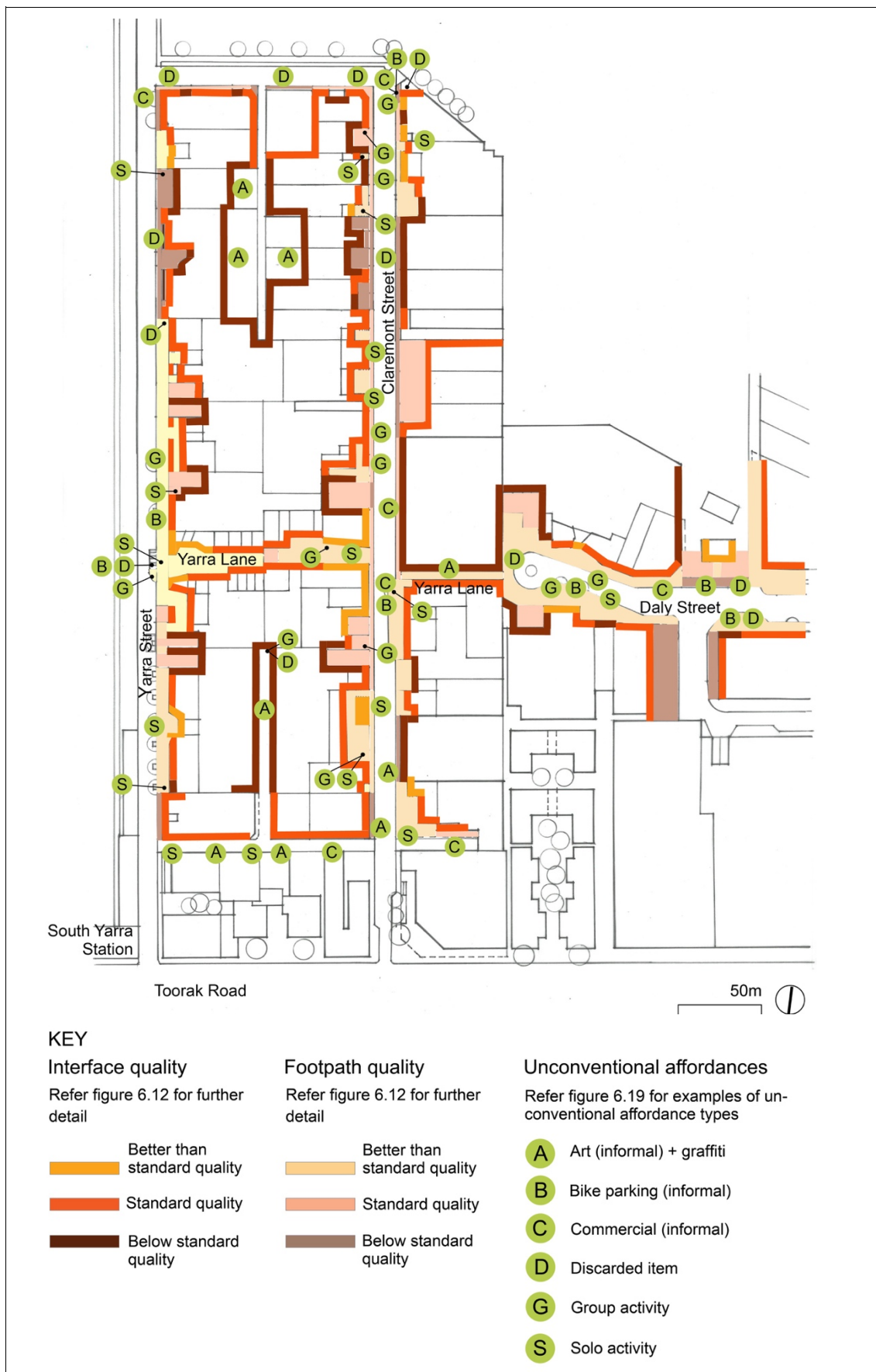


Figure 6.21 Location of observed unconventional affordances in relation to interface quality

6.5 Sensory perceptions

The third, and final, part of the fieldwork looks beyond physical affordances, or opportunities for action, to investigate multi-sensory perceptions of the street-level public realm; how it ‘feels’ to users. The goal is to see if any links can be identified between the materiality, and quality, of different frontage types (blank, transparent ‘active’, and non-standard) and sensory perceptions impacting on atmospheric ‘vitality’.

Accompanied sensory walk-alongs were conducted along a set route through the case study area, with ‘smartphone’ audio and visual recordings made by the participants (figure 6.22). Of the six participants, three have expertise in design or urban planning (two architects and a planner), and three are laypeople. A range of ages was represented (29-years to 69-years), with some cultural diversity (of the five participants born in Australia, three are first-generation Australians, of Chinese, Russian, and Italian ancestry).



Figure 6.22 Still image from test sensory walk-along recording, Yarra Ln

The focus of the walk-alongs was the street-level building frontages and the immediate street-level environment, including canopies, footpaths and landscaping. Additionally, all participants elected to also comment on the peripheral views and wider context, including the upper levels of the buildings. Transcripts of the audio recordings (refer Appendix B), along with the accompanying videos, were analysed for relevant observations; these were then plotted onto maps showing both frontage type and quality of materials and detailing to investigate relationships between frontage types and sensory responses.

Overall, many participants observed that the atmosphere within the case study precinct was 'ordinary', or 'dull and boring'. One participant, impacted by the 'massive scale' of the buildings, described the atmosphere as slightly 'intimidating'; another spoke about a 'harsh atmosphere'. More than one participant expressed surprise at the intensity of recent development within the precinct, and observed that they 'didn't feel like they were in Melbourne'; that the built scale and density 'felt like an Asian city'. All participants perceived that the atmosphere in Claremont St is impacted by the activity, noise, vibrations, dust, and heavy vehicle traffic generated by the active construction sites. One participant expressed the positive view that, although the area is currently '*not living up to its potential*', the '*infrastructure is there*' to support a more '*vibrant atmosphere*' once the remaining re-development and construction works are completed. On the other hand, another participant felt that the current '*urban cacophony*' is part of city life, and preferable to a '*sanitised*', homogenised urban atmosphere. The same (expert) participant also expressed concerns about the viability of '*future atmospheres of manufactured activation*'.

Specific sensory responses experienced and communicated during the walk-alongs included:

- *Auditory perceptions*

Construction noise, including construction traffic noise, in Claremont St was noted by all participants as having a significant impact. Train noise in Yarra St was also noted, but was considered either a '*momentary intrusion*', or seen as a '*positive attribute*', contributing to the '*urban atmosphere of the precinct*'. Loud mechanical fan noise from plant and equipment was noted as an auditory nuisance, whereas the voluble 'chit chat' emanating from the outdoor diners at the House of Lulu White Café was identified as contributing to the sense of '*liveliness*' experienced at this location.

- *Olfactory perceptions*

Smells were not identified as a significant sensory element. The few that were perceived included appealing food smells from a café footpath dining area; less appealing smells of 'fried food', 'meat pies and cigarettes'; and a re-occurring, unpleasantly strong smell of toilet cleaning products wafting from a services vent. Some participants recalled past smells, such as aromas from the recently closed Zumbo bakery, and the strong yeast smell from the Pinnacle factory which operated in the area until the early 2000s.

- *Tactile perceptions*

Climatic sensory perceptions included '*feeling gusts of wind*', and the '*wind tunnel effect*', and temperature impacts (thermoception), i.e. the pleasant sensation of the warmth of the sun on skin on a cool day, or the less comfortable heat effects on a very warm day. The '*feel*' of the pavement and vehicle crossovers underfoot was commented on, and two participants ran their hand along materials on street-level frontages, and touched the public realm sculpture in Claremont St.

- *Visual perceptions*

A lack of daylight was noted, specifically within Yarra Lane. Colour was a common theme, with many participants unimpressed by the predominance of grey (*'do we really need more grey?'*) and black (*'foreboding'*). Any splashes of colour (such as the yellow mosaic tile wall at 56 Claremont St, and the yellow façade at 3 Yarra St) were appreciated as being *'warm'* and *'interesting'*. Materials noted included stone and tile (*'colour'*, *'texture'*, *'charming'*), timber (*'warm, natural'*), heritage red-brick (*'excellent'*), textured concrete (*'interesting'*), and reflective metal soffit linings (also *'interesting'*). Landscaping – or a lack of *'greenery'* – was mentioned by all participants. Recurring visual *'irritants'* included services cupboards and grilles, *'ugly'* carpark entries, *'tacky'* or *'inconsistent'* signage, and the visual intrusion of motorbikes on footpaths. Standard shopfront glazing was *'boring'*, visible clutter behind the glass was *'yuck'* and *'poor housekeeping'*, and vacant shopfronts *'sad'*. Visually cohesive paving was noted as contributing to a *'sense of calm'*, while the diversity of architectural styles was considered a *'jumble'*, a *'hotch-potch'*, a *'mish-mash'*, and *'discordant'*.

- *Spatial perceptions*

A *'sense of tightness'* was experienced on narrower footpaths, whereas wider footpaths were perceived as spatially more *'comfortable'*.

Comments specifically relating to the mapped street-level interface types include:

- *Blank frontages and car transition/entries*

Responses to blank frontages, carpark entries and services cupboards were negative e.g. *'dead'*, *'ugly'*, *'disruptive'*, and *'bizarre'* (in reference to the fact that services cupboards are allowed on street-level frontages).

- *Transparent 'active' frontages*

Positive comments about transparent *'active'* frontages were, somewhat predictably, limited to those occupied by cafes, i.e. Dily Daly (6c Daly St), Two Birds One Stone (12 Claremont St), and House of Lulu White (4 Yarra St). For example, *'lively atmosphere out here in the sun'*. Comments about transparent *'active'* frontages occupied by non-cafe uses included: *'dull and boring'*, *'gives nothing back to street'* (real estate agencies and engineers' offices); and *'run of the mill'*, *'clutter'* (supermarket shopfront windows).

- *Non-standard frontages*

The small number of non-standard frontages within the case study precinct elicited responses. For example, the yellow mosaic tiled wall at 56 Claremont St received positive comments from four participants, including *'cute'* and *'charming'*, and the timber screen over the café shopfront at 1a/7 Yarra St was appreciated by one participant who ran their hand over the timber and noted the importance of *'materials you can touch at ground level'*.

Extracts from the participant responses to different frontage types were summarised and mapped in relation to frontage types and quality. Example comments, extracted from the transcripts to provide a sample for each frontage type, were selected where at least three participants commented about the specific frontage (figure 6.23). These comments are located in relation to frontage type (figure 6.24) and quality (figure 6.25).



- LP02: *'Run-of-the mill' supermarket*
 LP03: *Dirty windows and boxes show 'not very good housekeeping'*
 EP01: *'Tenant doesn't care about boxes against the window'*
 EP02: *'Fit for purpose' supermarket [...] no dressing'; Posters in shop window provide 'a bit of colour'*
 EP03: *'What I personally like about this space is the paving... it feels wide, with some patterning'*

01. Transparent 'active' frontage, supermarket 6A Daly St



- LP03: *[Tenancy in frontage is vacant] 'That little café in the front doesn't work, they should almost get rid of it. There is a brutal feeling of failure'*
 EP01: *'I like this.. you get smaller interfaces, you get larger interfaces, and interfaces like this,, I can see people [...] appropriating this, for better or for worse'*
 EP02: *'Wow [the tenancy] is tiny... I feel like it's only designed to be suitable for pop-ups'*
 EP03: *[Pedestrian entry] 'I think it's inviting us in... there's a sense of punctuation here'*

02. Transparent 'active' frontage, and pedestrian transition/entry, apartments, 3-7 Claremont St



- LP01: *'All of this is just dead, and it's the weekend.. and these businesses that could actually deal with all these apartments and people.. why is it all closed?'*
 LP03: *'As much as we need locksmiths and things I just don't find them very nice businesses to have a eye-level.. and real-estate agents [...] it just becomes one of those pockets where you get your stuff done, rather than enjoy the space'*
 EP03: *'They're not really spaces that are creating a lot of activity are they?'*

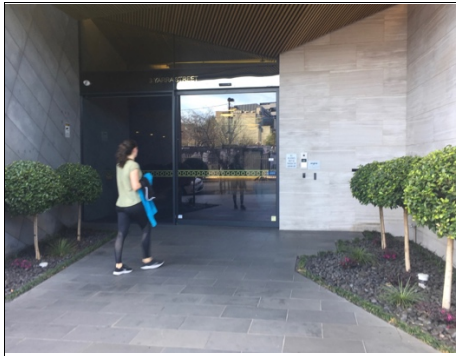
03. Transparent 'active' frontages, shops, Yarra Ln (western end)



- LP01: *'This is the first sign of life I've seen in our little walk'*
 LP02: *'Nice to see al fresco dining'*
 LP03: *'Nice to see action on the street [...] outside in the sun'*
 EP01: *'Café works well [...] umbrellas are quite charming'*
 EP03: *'Tables and chairs against the window is a more comfortable arrangement' [comparing to café in Claremont St where tables sit in middle of footpath]*

04. Transparent 'active' frontage, café, 4 Yarra St

Figure 6.23 Extracts, relating to frontage types and quality, from the sensory walk-along commentaries
 EP: Expert participants, LP: Laypeople. Refer figures 6.24 and 6.25 for location of comments



- LP01: 'Good to see a bit of greenery'; [indicating façade above] 'First hit of colour, the yellow goes well with the greys and blacks'
- LP02: 'I like the protection and big front door'; 'I like the reflection of the yellow [from the canopy above], and the angles'
- LP03: 'They look like fake trees... a bit too ordered and manicured'
- EP01: 'You get people coming in and out... that's quite nice'; 'A bit Surfers Paradise but is a good break-out from a monotonous wall'; likes 'scale and sun'
- EP02: 'Trees look a bit fake, like a plastic garden'

05. Pedestrian transition/entry, apartments, 3 Yarra St



- LP03: 'Offices can work at ground floor but has to be right kind of business'; 'Facade is dull [...] I quite like colour of white stone [...] but windows and blinds are just dark grey and blackness, flat surface. Why have so much window if you're not going to say something?'
- EP01: 'I like the stone at ground level' but 'rest of façade is dead'; 'maybe shouldn't be offices at ground floor, but it depends on tenant'
- EP02: [Indicating window with blind down]: 'Maybe the mess is all back there'; [Kitchenette window]: 'It's quite strange to be able to look into their kitchen'
- EP03: 'Boring office, but nice wide footpath [...] pretty good paving'

06. Transparent 'active' frontage, engineers' office, 2 Yarra St



- LP01: 'Down here is very dead again. At ground level, with nothing happening ... here they've put in a big window with nothing in it'
- LP03: Office window is 'yuck.. [the desk, files etc.] against the glass does nothing for the streetscape'
- EP01: 'Did they not foresee that [clutter against window] where it's turning its back to the street, this would happen?'; 'I prefer this [indicating discarded furniture on street outside window] to the clutter behind the glass – it's imperfect, a sign of life that adds to urban character'

07. Transparent 'active' frontage, real estate agents' office, 12 Yarra St



- LP02: Likes the canopy, 'the curved shape and the timber'
- LP03: 'Is that a little shop? [Looks through window]..no, it's just a sort of waiting area'; Likes 'the curved timber canopy and the contrast with the texture of the white mosaic tiles on the façade above'
- EP02: 'Is that a showroom...a display suite? No? You think they would put something here [in front of window] Why have full height glass because you are not really looking onto anything?'
- EP03: [Looks through window].. 'Looks like a display suite..'

08. Pedestrian transition/entry, apartments, 18 Yarra St

Figure 6.23 continued.



- LP02: [Looking through opening]: *'Why would you want to look into a carpark? I suppose it's for ventilation'.*
- EP02: [Looking through opening]: *'What's down here?...oh it's the carpark! I thought there'd be some exciting little shop or something....'*
- EP03: [Looking through opening] *'Is that carpark down here? Yes, it is...ok'.*



- LP03: *'Don't mind the daisies... bit twee but a good acid yellow tone'; 'good the way the fire services visible through the stair window have been painted the same colour'*
- EP01: *'It's kind of charming...a blank wall but they have done something. In the Instagram generation [...] it's placemaking'*
- EP02: *'This is quite cute... interesting'.*

09. Non-standard frontage, carpark wall, 56 Claremont St



- LP02: [Dead plants above services cupboard]: *'Looks pretty ordinary.. they need to take them out and put something else in'*
- EP02: [Dead plants above services cupboard]: *'Did they choose the wrong plants, or forget to irrigate and maintain?'*
- EP03: [Re: issue of location of services and designing to meet regulatory requirements]: *'could strip back cupboards and expose services artfully, like plumbers used to with copper pipes'*

10. Car transition/entry and blank frontage, apartments, 47 Claremont St



- LP01: [Indicating service cupboards] *So, they can put these things at the front? [Laughs]... I find that bizarre. This is such a valued space [...] They could have done this [balcony] lower ... and that could have been a café where you are actually looking out...but to have just that...'; [Indicating stairs] 'And that's steep [...] how do you get access if you can't climb the stairs?'*
- LP03: *'It's so blowy down here'; [Indicating stairs] that's not very wheelchair friendly is it? [Indicating services] More of those services. There must be better ways...'*
- EP03: [Indicating services cupboards] *'It's[...] like, oh yes, we have to have them... a bit like the old substations when they just [...] used to put them in a big box'*

11. Pedestrian transition/entry and blank frontage, apartments, 33 Claremont St

Figure 6.23 continued.

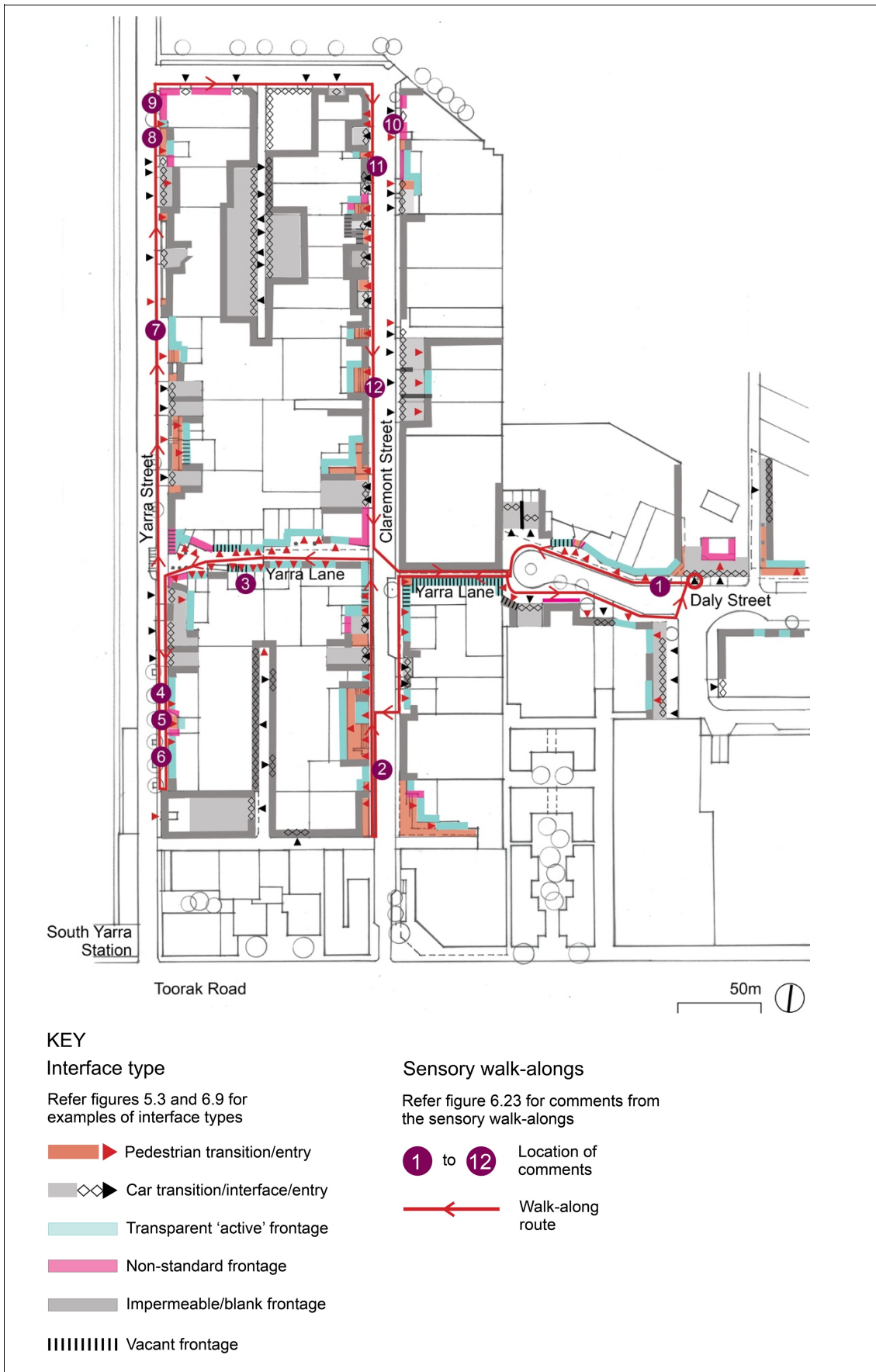


Figure 6.24 Location of selected sensory walk-along comments in relation to interface types



Figure 6.25 Location of selected sensory walk-along comments in relation to interface quality

In sum, although limited to a small sample, the commentaries from the sensory walk-alongs provide insights into the contribution street-level frontage design makes to users' perceptions of street-level vitality and urban quality. For example, transparent 'active' frontages occupied by busy cafes, with outdoor dining on the footpath/sidewalk, contributed to a sense of vitality; however those occupied by other uses, typically did not. Non-standard frontage designs often engaged participants' attention, and poorly considered services enclosures consistently elicited negative responses. The quality of detailing and materials, and colour schemes, also impacted on sensory perceptions and street-level atmospheres. The comments also indicate that frontage design is only one influencing factor on sensory perceptions; other contributing factors mentioned included building height and density, footpath/sidewalk width, climatic conditions (i.e. sunlight, wind, dust, noise), and the lack of soft landscaping, or 'greenery'.

6.6 Conclusions

To recap, the Forrest Hill exploratory case study supports the following observations:

- The behaviour observations show that transparent 'active' frontages do not always afford lingering, or other, activities that support diverse social interactions and contribute to street-life vitality. Although transparent 'active' frontages occupied by busy cafés can contribute to street-life vitality, it is not always possible to sustain these uses, especially in secondary streets away from main shopping strips, as evidenced by the turnover of occupancy and vacancy rates witnessed in the case study area.
- The sensory walk-along comments indicate that street-level frontage design, including the quality of materials, detailing and level of maintenance, impacts on sensory affordances and perceptions of urban quality.
- For the sensory walk-along participants, blank frontages, including services and carpark entries, were usually perceived as visually intrusive, or as 'dead zones' within the street-level public realm. However, the unconventional affordance observation data indicates that blank frontages can also afford opportunities for lingering activities and unconventional affordances that are not enabled by transparent 'active' frontages. Further, both the observation and sensory walk-along data show that a few 'non-standard' frontages can afford different activities and sensory responses that may contribute to street-life vitality.

In sum, the Forrest Hill case study data demonstrates that current active frontage codes are not *always* effective in affording the diversity of users and use identified by Jacobs (1961/2011) and others as key prerequisites for an interactive and vital street-life. The data also suggests that 'non-standard' frontages can afford a diversity of use and sensory experiences, and that blank frontages, when part of a mix, can also contribute to street-life, by affording sites for lingering activities and opportunities for informal appropriation and non-commodified self-expression.

7.0 Non-standard frontages

The Forrest Hill case study research presented in Chapter 6.0 indicates that active frontage codes promoting transparent glazed retail shopfronts are not *always* effective in affording physical and sensory vitality at street-level; further, transparent shopfronts may *limit* affordances supporting diversity of users, use and sensory experiences. While successful cafes can activate their transparent facades, affording ‘lively’ atmospheres, cafés won’t work at the base of every building. The implication for urban design, architecture, and planning is that alternative strategies to active frontage codes requiring extensive areas of transparent glazing need to be considered. To explore this concept further, this chapter turns to the second part of the research by asking:

What street-edge morphology, and/or function, might be more effective than prescribed transparent retail frontages in affording street-life vitality?

and

What urban design strategies and tactics could afford these alternative street-level interfaces?

Developing the hypothesis that there *are* alternative – and more creative – strategies that might be employed, instead of prescribed ‘active’ transparent retail frontages, to afford vital street-life, the first section investigates reference global exemplars of non-standard frontages to explore other possibilities. The analysis of the exemplars includes informed speculation about affordances potentially supported by these non-standard frontages. The lessons learnt are then collated and applied to formulate a set of design tactics and principles, referencing the urban design strategies for the street-level interface (introduced in section 4.5) that seek to maximise diversity of users, use and sensory affordances.

7.1 Reference exemplars

A seminal, and oft-cited (Bobić 2004, Dovey 2016), example of an innovative contemporary frontage, that varies from standard glazed retail shopfront design, is the Storefront for Art and Architecture project in New York. Designed in 1993 by architect Steven Holl with artist/designer Vito Acconci for a not-for-profit gallery, the 30.4-metre (100-foot) long frontage is the key building element for the shallow, wedge shaped tenancy (figure 7.2). Ten fibre-reinforced concrete facade panels can be arranged in permeable permutations, pivoting and extending the gallery out over the public footpath. The varying configurations of the flexible frontage afford internal display panels and shelving, window/door openings, seating, and an external ‘art wall’ when the panels are closed (figure 7.1). By blurring the boundary between interior and exterior, Acconci and Holl aimed to ‘challenge this symbolic border which underlines the exclusivity of the art world, where only those on the inside belong’ (Steven Holl Architects).



Figure 7.1 Operable facade, The Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York.
Photo: Artandarch

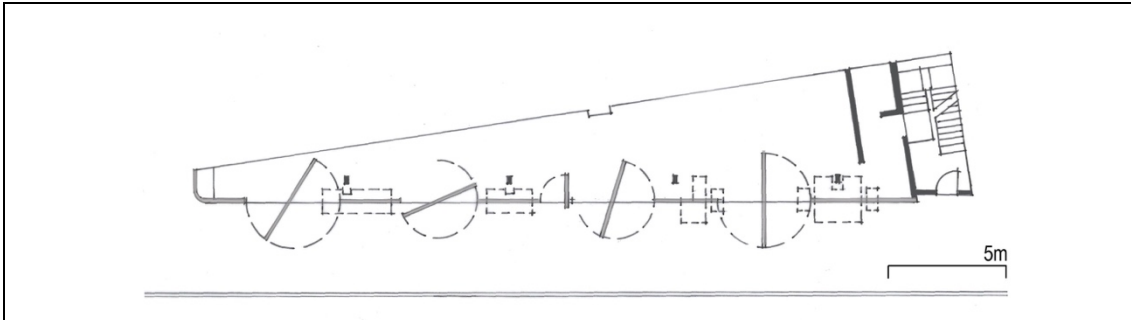


Figure 7.2 Floorplan, The Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York.
Architect: Steven Holl with artist Vito Acconci 1993. Based on drawing by Steven Holl Architects.

The flexible frontage performs in ways which would not be afforded by a standard glazed shopfront. Porosity is a key theme in Holl's (Holl 2000) work and the pivoting panels punctuate the facade, affording connection between the interior and the footpath, and blurring the boundary between the public and private realms. At night, when the panels are open, light spills onto the street, inviting all to enter. When closed, the panels afford an intriguing 'blankness', enlivened by the pattern of the interlocking sections, and graphics or other treatments relating to the current exhibition.

Looking beyond the Storefront for Art and Architecture, other contemporary reference exemplar projects are investigated. Returning to the key goal of maximising affordances that contribute to street-life vitality by supporting diversity of use, users and sensory experience, the exemplar investigation seeks strategies that *may* maximise these affordances. Informed by the literature review, and the findings of the Forrest Hill case study, the speculation regarding potential affordances focusses on the following key themes:

- *interior morphology/design*, i.e. building structure, internal partitioning, location of building services and circulation; and
- *frontage morphology/design*, including the transition, or edge, zone between the public realm and the building interior i.e. facade structure, form, materials, construction details, location and detailing of external building services.

Relevant urban codes impacting on diversity of street-level building uses and frontage morphology are also noted, when this information could be readily sourced.

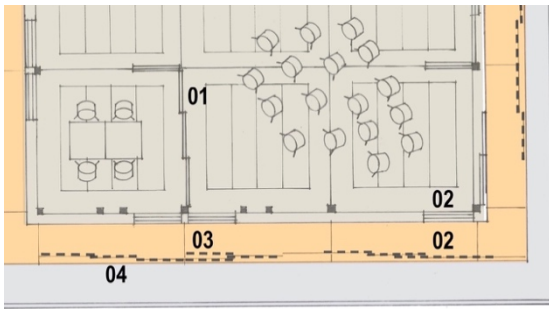
Substrate Factory, Ayase, Kanagawa, Tokyo, Japan. Aki Hamada Architects 2016



Street façade fully open
Photos: © Kenta Hasegawa



Outer steel screen closed, glazed façade open



5m

KEY

- 01** Widespan structure and sliding internal screens afford nimble transformation of use.
- 02** Layers of sliding screens afford operable porosity and (when open) blur boundary between inside/outside and public/private.
- 03** Flexible edge zone affords diverse forms of occupation at the public/private interface.
- 04** Screen details, and filtered views to crafted timber interior, afford sensory experiences.

Plan detail at street-level interface, based on drawing by Aki Hamada Architects

Project description:

Y.K Electronics Substrate Factory is located in a Semi-Industrial Zone in Ayase, in Tokyo's Kanagawa Prefecture, where zoning flexibility permits factories (apart from heavy industry) and residences to co-exist (Aki Hamada Architects 2017). The factory building has a multi-purpose showroom and workshop space at street-level that is made available to the local community. The frontage has two layers of sliding screens: externally, panels of open metal slats, and, internally, of transparent glass. Internal sliding shoji screens allow different configurations of the street-level spaces.

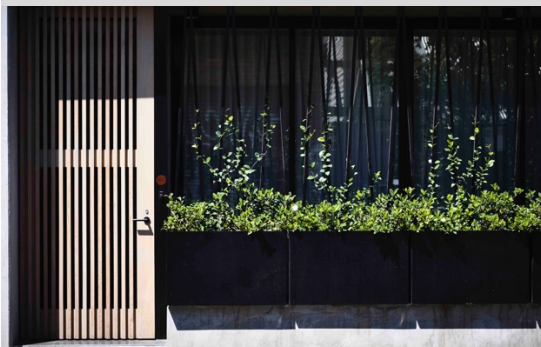
Urban codes:

Flexible land-use zoning: Allows a variety of uses to co-exist (Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport 2003), and affords more 'nimble' adaptation from one use to another.

Tactics and potential affordances	
Interior morphology	<i>Widespan structure and sliding partition screens:</i> Accommodates a variety of street-level uses, affording diversity of both use and users. <i>Exposed services:</i> Affords nimble adaptation of use.
Frontage morphology	<i>Operable porosity:</i> Street-level façade affords varying degrees of operable porosity, permeability, privacy and weather protection; blurs boundary between inside/outside and public/private (when open). <i>Flexible edge zone:</i> Edge zone affords diverse types of occupation at the public/private interface. <i>Materials and detailing:</i> Slatted metal and glazed external screens afford tactile and visual sensory experiences, and allow filtered views of the crafted timber structure beyond.

Figure 7.3 Reference exemplar: Substrate Factory, Ayase, Kanagawa, Tokyo, Japan

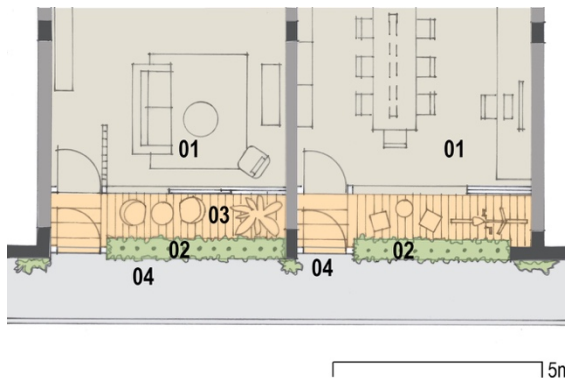
George Corner, Melbourne, Australia. McAllister Alcock Architects + Neometro 2015



Planter box/screen to street-level facade
Photos: © Derek Swalwell



Interior view to street



15m

Plan detail at street-level interface, based on drawing by MAArchitects

KEY

- 01** Widespan structure and open-plan internal layout afford nimble transformation of use.
- 02** Planter boxes with screens afford security and filtered porosity while allowing interaction; removable to afford facade adaptation.
- 03** Flexible edge zone affords diverse forms of occupation at the public/private interface.
- 04** Fine-grain tactile details, and landscaping, at eye level afford sensory experiences.

Project description:

George Corner is a 5-story mixed-use project, sited between commercial and residential neighbourhoods in the inner-Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy. Until commercial synergies could develop, it seemed unlikely that all five street-level shopfront tenancies would be occupied. Therefore, three units were designed with flexible facades, incorporating removable modular planter boxes and screens, while internal layouts allow either residential or commercial use.

Urban codes:

Land-use zoning: Commercial C1 Zoning does not require approval for shop or office use, but a permit is required for residential use (greater than 2m frontage), and for other uses (e.g. artist's workshop), limiting affordances for nimble adaptation from one use to another.

Active frontage codes: Frontages required to 'facilitate street level activity' (City of Yarra 2011); however, minimum areas of clear glazing or entry are *not* prescribed.

	Tactics and potential affordances
Interior morphology	<i>Widespan structure, non-load bearing partitions, services location:</i> Open plan layout, with services 'pod', affords variety of street-level uses.
Frontage morphology	<p><i>Adjustable porosity:</i> Planter boxes with integrated screens afford security and filtered visual porosity/privacy while allowing surveillance of the footpath. Occupants can adjust porosity through density of planting.</p> <p><i>Adaptable facade:</i> Removable planter/screens afford future adaptation e.g. from studio apartments to non-residential use. Note: to date this affordance has not been actualised and the units remain residential.</p> <p><i>Flexible edge zone:</i> Edge zone between planter boxes and main facade (a re-interpretation of local verandahs/pocket gardens built to the front boundary) afford diverse forms of occupation at the public/private interface.</p> <p><i>Materials and detailing:</i> Fine grain 'crafted' detailing, tactile timber, and 'soft' planting at eye level afford sensory experiences.</p>

Figure 7.4 Reference exemplar: George Corner, Melbourne, Australia

Palma Hideaway House, La Palma, Spain. Mariana de Delás Arquitecta 2019



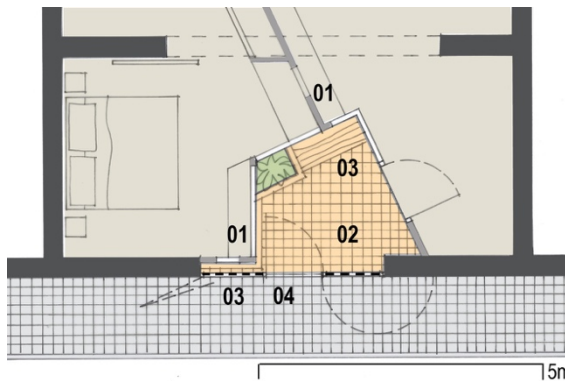
Open screens
Photos: © José Hevia



Partly open screens



View from interior to street



KEY

- 01** Removable partitions afford nimble transformation from one use to another.
- 02** Flexible edge zone affords diverse forms of occupation at the public/private interface.
- 03** Fine-grain, crafted materials and details, and soft planting, afford sensory experiences.
- 04** Operable perforated screens afford varying levels of public/private engagement.

Plan detail at street-level interface, based on drawing by Mariana de Delás Arquitecta

Project description:

Palma Hideaway House involved the conversion of a former motorbike repair shop. A recessed 'mini garden courtyard', with bench seat and tiled planters, was created to provide a transitional space affording an acoustic and privacy buffer, while allowing daylight and ventilation to the interior. The external screens of perforated metal can be open, partially open, or closed to afford varying degrees of connection to the street (Mariana de Delás Arquitecta 2020).

Tactics and potential affordances	
Interior morphology	<i>Widespan structure, non-load bearing partitions (to edge zone):</i> Affords nimble transformation for diversity of uses.
Frontage morphology	<p><i>Operable porosity:</i> Perforated screens can be open, partly open or closed to afford varying levels of connection at the public/private interface.</p> <p><i>Transformable facade:</i> Lightweight screen and timber clad partitioning could be easily replaced with an alternative facade to afford a diversity of street-level uses.</p> <p><i>Flexible edge zone:</i> affords diverse forms of occupation at the public/private interface.</p> <p><i>Materials and detailing:</i> Fine grain 'crafted' detailing, tactile timber, ceramic tiles and 'soft' planting in the transition courtyard afford sensory experiences.</p>

Figure 7.5 Reference exemplar: Palma Hideaway House, Palma, Spain

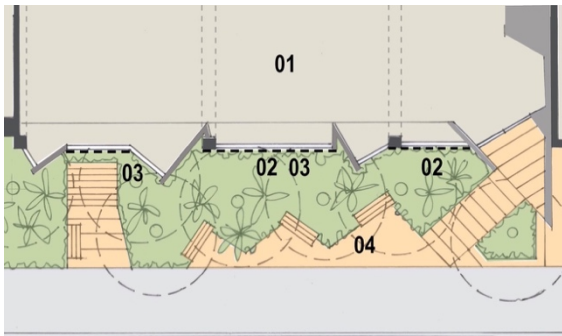
Grimwade Centre, Melbourne, Australia. JCB Architects 2015



Edge zone between building facade and footpath
Photos: © Emily Bartlett



Night-time illumination of facade



5m

Plan detail at street-level interface, based on drawing by JCB Architects

KEY

- 01** Widespan structure and high ceiling afford nimble transformation of use.
- 02** Perforated screens afford filtered porosity; vibrant colour affords sensory experience.
- 03** Transformable porosity, with opportunity to remove screens, and to create new openings.
- 04** Flexible edge affords informal occupation; considered lighting of facade affords sensory experience and perceptions of safety.

Project description:

The Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, at the University of Melbourne's Parkville campus, is located on a busy roadway and tram route. The existing brown brick street-level façade was replaced with floor to ceiling glazing, covered with a screen of bright yellow perforated metal. 'Bookend' framed window openings allow views between inside and outside.

Urban Codes:

Land-use zoning: Public Use Zone 2 requires a permit for any use not associated with education.

Active frontage codes: Design Development Overlay DD046 requires for 'built-form outcomes to create an environment with high pedestrian amenity' (City of Melbourne 2006).

Tactics and potential affordances	
Interior morphology	<i>Widespan structure, non-load bearing partitions, exposed services:</i> Affords nimble adaptation to a variety of street-level uses.
Frontage morphology	<p><i>Filtered porosity:</i> Layering of perforated metal over the glazed façade affords privacy for internal workspaces, while framed windows allow visual connection between 'private' and 'public'. Perforated screens also shade glazing, while affording filtered daylight to workshops.</p> <p><i>Transformable facade:</i> Screens could be removed, and framed windows adapted to create additional entries, affording diversity of ground floor uses.</p> <p><i>Flexible edge zone:</i> Landscaped setback affords informal occupation while providing opportunities to come close to the building to 'look and touch'. Note: during visits, this affordance was only occasionally actualised.</p> <p><i>Integrated lighting:</i> Night-time lighting of dynamic form and vibrant colour affords sensory perceptions, and perceptions of safety.</p> <p><i>Materials and detailing:</i> Pattern of perforations, vibrant yellow colour, considered detailing, and planting afford sensory experiences.</p>

Figure 7.6 Reference exemplar: Grimwade Centre, Melbourne, Australia

El Ninot Market, Barcelona, Spain. Mateo Arquitectura 2015



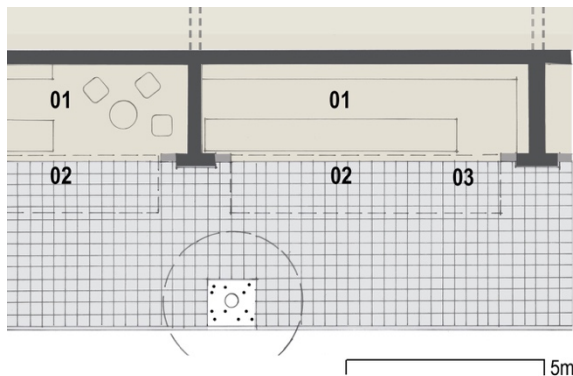
Market facade
Photos: © Adrià Goula



Closed



Open



KEY

- 01** Compact tenancy sizes affords diversity of small-scale uses at street-level.
- 02** Operable facade panels afford dynamic facade transformation and blur boundary between public/private (when open); affords temporal 'considered' blankness (when closed).
- 03** Fine grain detailing and materiality of metal clad facade affords sensory experience.

Plan detail at street-level interface, based on drawing by Mateo Arquitectura

Project description

The renovation of Barcelona's 1894 El Ninot Market included the installation of a 'skin' of external stalls, facing out onto the adjoining street and plaza. Slotted metal cladding provides solar screening while allowing daylight and ventilation to the market interior. On market days, the stall facades fold up, forming protective awnings, and advertising to the surrounding city that the market is 'open for business' (Mateo Arquitectura 2015).

Tactics and potential affordances	
Interior morphology	<i>Tenancy size:</i> The shallow 'skin' of compact tenancies wrapping the main market hall affords a diversity of small scale uses at street-level.
Frontage morphology	<p><i>Operable facade:</i> Affords dynamic facade transformation and blurs boundary between public/private when open, with weather protection, and security when the stall is closed. Open facade affords sensory perceptions with open connection between the stall interior and the street.</p> <p><i>Temporal 'considered' blankness:</i> The main facade of the market hall continues to the ground, affording a tactile and visually interesting 'blankness' when the market is closed.</p> <p><i>Materials and detailing:</i> Detailing of metal cladding (with faceting, ribs and variation in level of reflection) afford visual and tactile sensory perceptions at eye level when facade is closed.</p>

Figure 7.7 Reference exemplar: El Ninot Market, Barcelona, Spain

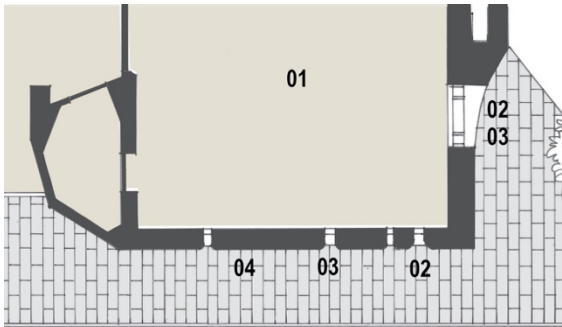
Ian Potter Southbank Centre, Melbourne, Australia. John Wardle Architects 2019



Aperture windows in the Sturt Street facade
Photos: © Trevor Mein



Oculus window in the plaza wall



5m

Plan detail at street-level interface, based on drawing by John Wardle Architects

KEY

- 01** Auditorium located at street-level affords engagement at public/private interface.
- 02** Punctuated 'considered' blankness, with punched apertures at varying heights, affords visual porosity, 'intrigue', and engagement.
- 03** Deep recesses and sills afford urban play and informal occupation.
- 04** Fine-grain tactile and visually 'rich' materials and details at eye level afford sensory experiences.

Project description:

The Ian Potter Southbank Centre is home to the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (MCM) at the University of Melbourne's Southbank campus. Solid areas of street level façade are punctuated with a variety of window openings affording views into the auditorium. The surface of the concrete wall is enlivened with fine detailing, visible aggregate, and a grid of red glazed ceramic discs.

Urban codes:

Land-use zoning: Capital Cities Zoning affords some flexibility for use at street level; however office and residential use are restricted at street-level to maximum 2-metre wide frontage.

Active frontage codes: requirement for '5m or 80% of street frontage (whichever is greater) as an entry or windows to allow occupants to engage with the street' (City of Melbourne 2015). The Ian Potter Southbank Centre demonstrates an *alternative* street frontage design strategy.

	Tactics and potential affordances
Interior morphology	<i>Location of auditorium:</i> siting the auditorium at street-level affords opportunities for engagement at the public/private interface.
Frontage morphology	<p><i>Punctuated 'considered' blankness:</i> Punched window apertures in the solid wall afford 'intrigue and curiosity' (Gusheh 2019), and visual porosity. Small framed openings, at varying heights, afford engagement - both between the occupants and the street, and between passers-by and the building interior. Deep sills afford urban play, and informal seating (to the oculus window).</p> <p><i>Materials and detailing:</i> Sensory affordances offered are both visual and tactile i.e. the fine-grain detailing and pointillist pattern of red dots at eye level relieve the 'blankness' of the solid wall, while the glazed ceramic discs and smooth, curved concrete reveals to apertures invite the hand to touch. Robust materiality affords use of sills for informal seating and urban play.</p>

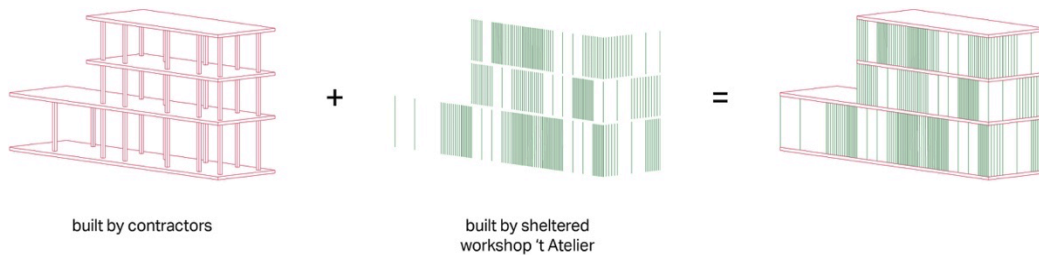
Figure 7.8 Reference exemplar: Ian Potter Southbank Centre, Melbourne, Australia

t Atelier Workshops, Mechelen, Belgium. dmvA Architects 2019



Street-level frontages: 50% 'considered' blankness, 50% transparent
Photos: © Johnny Umans

Crafted 'blank' infill panels



Construction sequence diagram showing flexible, infill facade
Source: © dmvA Architects 2020

Project description:

The t Atelier is a social enterprise that provides employment for people who have difficulty finding work in the regular job market. The building houses bicycle repair and timber workshops at street-level with offices and meeting rooms above. The building structure, of concrete slabs and columns, was designed to allow members of the t Atelier workshop to craft the infill facades. This strategy afforded participation, and demonstrates the skills of the woodworking team (dmvA Architects 2020).

Tactics and potential affordances	
Interior morphology	<i>Wide span slabs, no internal load bearing walls, exposed services:</i> Affords flexibility for future change and diversity of street-level uses.
Frontage morphology	<p><i>Adaptable facade:</i> Load bearing columns with infill panels, and no services located in external facades, affords nimble adaptation for other street-level uses.</p> <p><i>Crafted 'considered blankness:</i> Non-transparent sections of street-level frontage afford locations for informal occupation and lingering activities.</p> <p><i>Materials and detailing:</i> Sensory affordances are both visual and tactile i.e. the visible grain and 'warm' colour of the timber, and the visual depth and tactile surface variation provided by the crafted timber battens.</p>

Figure 7.9 Reference exemplar: t Atelier Workshops, Mechelen, Belgium

Europe Building, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. DUS Architects 2016



Sculptural facade

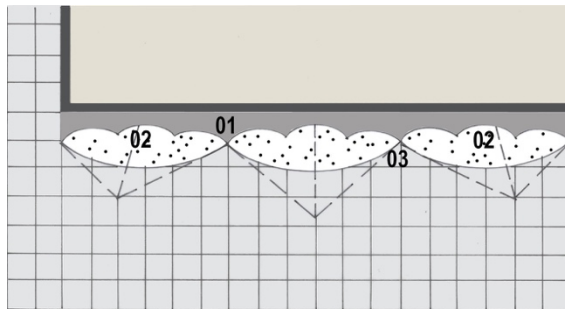
Photos: © Ossip Van Duivenbode



Recessed benches



Integrated lighting



KEY

- 01** 3-D printed panels can be replaced, affording flexible facade and diversity of building use.
- 02** Sculptural 'considered' blankness of folded facade affords visual sensory experiences, and creates sheltered niches affording intimate social spaces.
- 03** Robust and textured materials afford tactile sensory experience and informal urban play; strong colour and integrated lighting afford visual sensory experiences.

5m

Plan detail at street-level interface

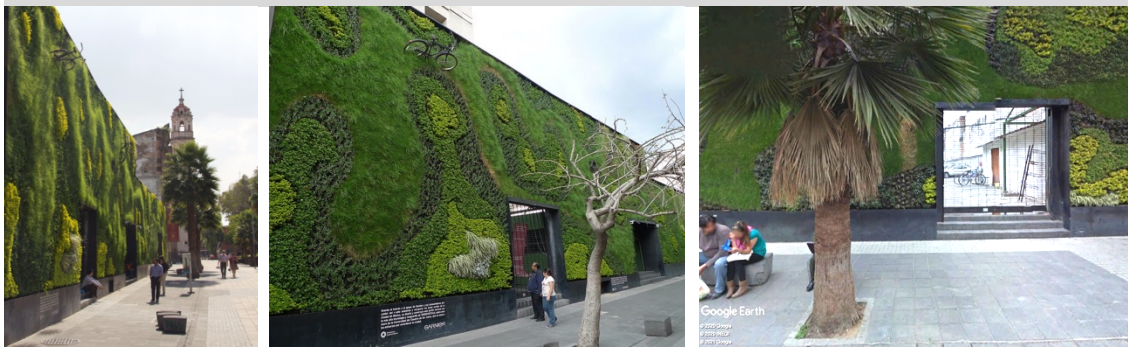
Project description:

The Europe Building was a temporary installation, constructed to host European Union politicians during the Netherlands's six month rotation as European Presidency. The design of the entry façade incorporated 'sail' shapes, referencing the marine history of the location. The sails created alcoves, housing recessed benches made of concrete, and faceted 3-D printed bioplastic in EU blue; these were shredded and re-printed at the end of the Presidency (DUS Architects 2016).

Tactics and potential affordances	
Interior morphology	Not relevant to this facade design strategy
Frontage morphology	<p><i>Transformable facade:</i> Pre-fabricated, 3-D printed elements can be easily removed and replaced, affording flexibility of façade design and diversity of building use.</p> <p><i>Sculptural 'considered' blankness:</i> Sculptural, folded facade affords visual interest and creates semi-sheltered niches, affording intimate social spaces at the edge of the public realm. Playful forms afford informal urban play.</p> <p><i>Integrated lighting:</i> Façade as lighting element affords 24 hour visual interest and activity, and perceptions of safety.</p> <p><i>Materials and detailing:</i> Use of strong blue colour and textured plastic panels afford visual and tactile interest. Robust materials afford urban play.</p>

Figure 7.10 Reference exemplar: Europe Building, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, Mexico City, Mexico. Verdevertical 2012

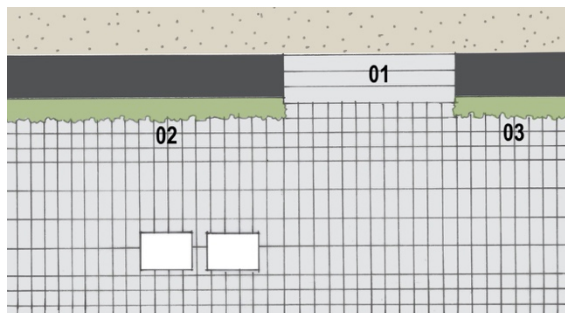


Street view

Green wall with punctuated openings

Entry to internal courtyard

Photos: Mike Peel 2015 (left), Mark Hogan 2014 (centre), Google Streetview 2013 (right)



KEY

- 01** Punctuated openings frame views to interior courtyards, affording intrigue and curiosity; steps afford informal seating.
- 02** Green 'considered' blankness of landscaped facade affords 'soft' edge at public/private interface.
- 03** Natural 'living' wall supports multi-sensory affordances including visual, tactile, olfactory and aural.

5m

Plan detail at street-level interface

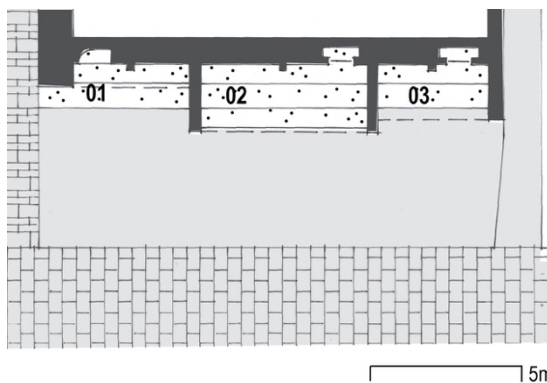
Project description:

The Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana is located in the historic centre of Mexico City. Fronting a pedestrianised street, the vertical garden covers an existing facade, with penetrations providing access to the buildings and courtyard beyond. Sponsored by the Ministry of the Environment (with Garnier), the information signboard explains that project reflects Mexico City's focus on building gardens to combat air pollution, and its aim to come closer to meeting the World Health Organisation's recommendation of 9m² of green area per inhabitant. The designers, Verdevertical, also sought to create an organic art piece, inverting the design of a 'typical park' from the horizontal to the vertical, with a 'pathway' of grass outlined by plant species of different colours and aromas, and incorporating daily objects including a bicycle (McManus 2016).

Tactics and potential affordances	
Interior morphology	Not relevant to this facade strategy.
Frontage morphology	<p><i>Green 'considered' blankness:</i> Landscaped facade affords a 'soft' edge to the street-level public realm. Biophilic aspects may afford lingering activities.</p> <p><i>Punctuated openings:</i> Afford intrigue and curiosity; entry steps afford informal occupation including seating.</p> <p><i>Materials and details:</i> Natural 'living' wall supports multi-sensory affordances including visual, tactile, olfactory, and aural. If plants are edible, could also afford taste.</p> <p>Integrated planting design and quirky details (e.g. bicycle) afford visual interest and lingering activities.</p> <p>Robust materiality of entry steps affords informal occupation and seating.</p>

Figure 7.11 Reference exemplar: Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, Mexico City, Mexico

Emergency Scenery Shelter, Olot, Spain. Unparelld'arquitectes + Quim Domene 2019



KEY

- 01 Loose (unprogrammed) 'considered' blankness affords diversity of non-determined uses and users.
- 02 Textured, fine-grain materials and details afford visual and tactile sensory experiences; robust materiality affords informal occupation and urban play.
- 03 Integrated lighting affords visual sensory experience, and preceptions of safety.

Plan detail at street-level interface, based on drawing by Unparelld'arquitectes

Project description:

The arched Emergency Scenery Public Shelter was constructed on four buttresses, supporting a masonry wall where an adjoining building was demolished for road widening. The new construction also provides waterproofing to the existing wall. The architects state that the open, arched structure is intended to be used as a shelter and performance backdrop, affording 'scenographic support to urban life, accommodating events, and encouraging activity on the streets.' The design incorporates patterned glass panels, designed by artist Quim Domene, referencing the memory of the important role of craft and commerce in the area (Unparelld'arquitectes 2020).

Tactics and potential affordances	
Interior morphology	Not applicable to this facade design strategy.
Frontage morphology	<p><i>Loose 'considered' blankness:</i> In addition to affording shelter from the rain, the 'theatrically' arched structure affords diversity of non-determined uses and users.</p> <p><i>Integrated lighting:</i> Integrated lighting affords perceptions of safety and security, supporting diversity of users.</p> <p><i>Materials and details:</i> Textured concrete and fine-grained brick support visual and tactile sensory affordances.</p> <p>Robust materiality affords diversity of use, including informal seating and urban play.</p> <p>Integrated glass art panels and rich detailing afford visual interest.</p>

Figure 7.12 Reference exemplar: Emergency Scenery Shelter, Olot, Spain

7.2 Lessons learnt

Building on the exemplar investigations, this section draws together the ‘lessons learnt’ from the non-standard frontage design tactics. The analyses of the selected exemplars looked to both interior and exterior morphology, and (in some instances) to urban codes, impacting on affordances that may conceivably afford diversity of use, users, and sensory experience. These alternative tactics have been collated (figure 7.13), and grouped under the key themes of: *nimble occupation*: flexible street-level building configuration, affording diversity of users and use; *flexible porosity*: affording variation in visual and physical permeability; *considered blankness*: pockets of blankness affording sites for lingering activities and informal occupation; and *close encounter*: considered building design at eye level (Gehl, Kaefer and Reigstad 2006), affording sensory experiences.

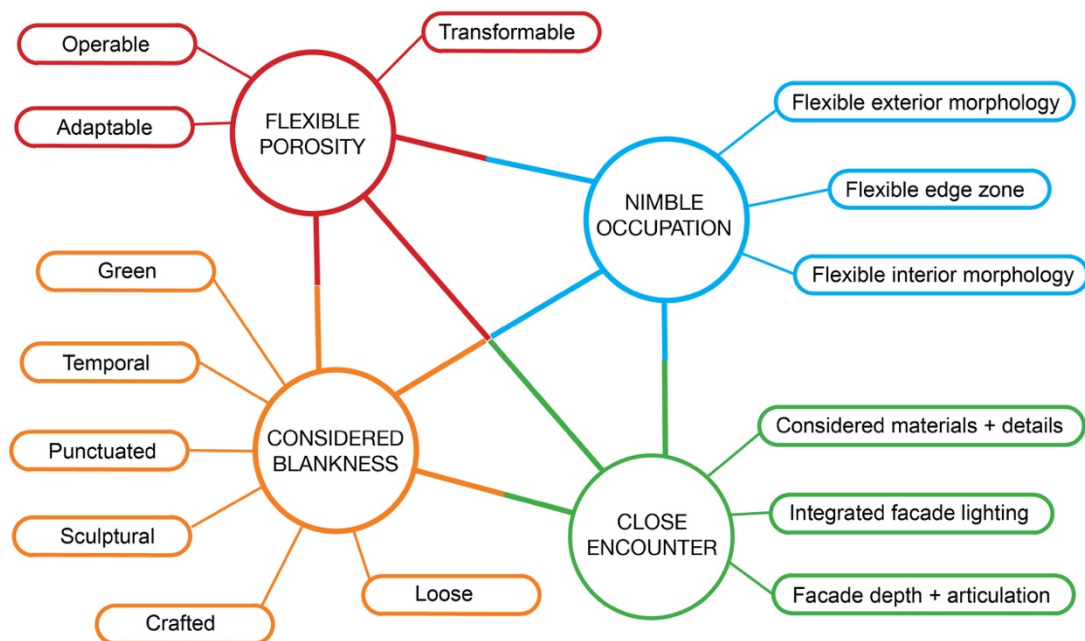


Figure 7.13 Alternative interface design tactics, affording diversity of use, users, and sensory experience

The ‘lessons learnt’ from analysing the sample of reference exemplars demonstrates that there is no *single* alternative strategy for the governance and design of the street-level public/private interface i.e. a variety of strategies has been adopted for each exemplar project. As the diagram illustrates, connections – and overlaps – will inevitably occur.

A brief explanation of the four key themes follows:

Nimble occupation

Diversity and complexity of building use have been long recognised amongst the key prerequisites for urban vitality (Jacobs 1961/2011). Strategies which afford nimble, uncomplicated transformation from one use, or form of occupation, to another support this diversity and complexity.

Flexible land-use zoning codes

While the analyses focus on design tactics, urban codes may also impact nimble occupation. The Substrate Factory in Tokyo (figures 7.3, 7.16, 7.17) demonstrates a development response to Japan's land-use zoning codes which support a fine-grain mix of uses. Instead of single or restricted-use, generally any land-uses that are 'less of a nuisance' are allowed to operate within a zone (Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport 2003, figure 7.14). For example, residential use is allowed in all zones, apart from the Exclusively Industrial Zone; and residential building in all zones can include other small-scale functions (shop, office etc.).

Examples of buildings	can be built												usually cannot be built	
	Category I exclusively low-rise residential zone	Category II exclusively low-rise residential zone	Category I mid-high-rise oriented residential zone	Category II mid-high-rise oriented residential zone	Category I residential zone	Category II residential zone	Quasi-residential zone	Neighborhood commercial zone	Commercial zone	Quasi-industrial zone	Industrial zone	Exclusively industrial zone	Area with no land use zone designation (Urbanization Control Area are excluded)	
Houses, Houses with other small scale function (store, office, etc.)														
Kindergartens, Schools (Elementary, Junior High, Senior High)														
Shrines, Temples, Churches, Clinics														
Hospitals, Universities														
Stores (mainly selling dairy commodities)/Restaurants with floor space of 150m ² max. on the first or second floor (excluding※)												D		
Stores/Restaurants with floor space of 500m ² max. on the first or second floor (excluding※)												D		
Stores/Restaurants not specified above (excluding※)				A	B									
Offices, etc. not specified above (excluding※)				A	B									
Hotels, Inns					B									
Karaoke boxes (excluding※)														
Theaters, Movie theaters (excluding※)							C							
※Theaters, Movie theaters, Stores, Restaurants, Amusement facilities and so on, with more than 10,000m ² of floor area														
Bathhouses with private rooms														
Independent garage with floor space of 300m ² max. on the first or second floor														
Warehouse of warehousing company, Independent garage of other types than specified above														
Auto repair shop					E	E	F	G	G					
Factory with some possibility of danger or environmental degradation														
Factory with strong possibility of danger or environmental degradation														

Note A : Must not be built on the third floor or higher. Must not exceed a floor area of 1,500m².
 B : Must not exceed a floor area of 3,000m².
 C : Audience seating floor area must not exceed 200m².

D : Stores and restaurants must not be built
 E : Floor area must not exceed 50m².
 F : Floor area must not exceed 150m².
 G : Floor area must not exceed 300m².

Figure 7.14 Nimble occupation: Japan's allowable building use by land-use zones

Source: Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport 2003.

In addition to affording diversity and complexity of co-functioning use, the zoning codes also afford flexibility to immediately respond to change. An example (Price 2014) is that if more land than needed for current commercial use exists in a commercial zone, residential use can be built. If demand changes, the residential properties can quickly be converted to commercial use. In contrast to Japan's flexible, 'inclusive' zoning system, Australia's states and territories have adopted an 'exclusionary' land-use zoning framework where uses within designated zones are either permitted 'as of right', permitted with an approved planning permit or development approval, or prohibited. Under this zoning system, changing from one use to another may cause extensive, and often costly, time delays that erode affordances supporting nimble occupation.

Flexible edge zone

The edge zone, or interstitial space, between the street-level occupancy and the public realm of the footpath plays an important role in affording life to take place on the edge of the building, bringing ‘public and private life very close, and promoting encounters that create community’ (Sim 2019, p.262). A flexible, multi-functional edge zone affords nimble occupation by supporting diverse programs. For example, a tenancy with a flexible edge zone might operate as a flower shop during the day, with outdoor displays, and transform to a bar with outdoor tables at the building edge at night-time.

The El Ninot Market demonstrates a more ‘determined’ flexible edge zone, with a habitable skin of shallow market stalls wrapping the main market hall, affording diverse commercial uses (figure 7.7). A different edge zone strategy is demonstrated at George Corner where the hybrid zone between the front façade and footpath is multi-functional i.e. affording additional landscaping, a place to engage with street-life while maintaining privacy, or for storing bicycles, prams etc. (figure 7.15, left and centre). If the George Corner planter boxes were removed then the edge zone could be occupied by other uses; for example, a café bench seat. Similarly, the interstitial zone between the two layers of operable sliding facade screens of the Substrate Factory (figure 7.3), and the transition entry courtyard of Palma Hideaway House (figure 7.15, right), may afford alternative forms of occupation.



Flexible edge space with planter screen, George Corner, Melbourne



Behind the planters, George Corner



Multi-functional interstitial space, Palma Hideaway House, Palma

Figure 7.15 Nimble occupation: flexible edge zone

Photos: Centre: © Jellis Craig Real Estate, Right: © José Hevia

Flexible interior and exterior morphology

Flexible exterior morphology, or facade design, affords adaptability of use, and this is discussed further in the following section on *flexible porosity*. The interior morphology, including the configuration of street-level occupancies, also plays an important role in affording flexibility and diversity of use. In Melbourne, some municipalities have adopted codes requiring higher ceilings on the lower levels of mixed residential/commercial buildings to better afford a mix of residential and non-residential uses (City of Stonnington 2017). While increased ceiling heights can be

important (for example, to accommodate the internal services associated with commercial uses), there is also a case for making the floorplate of street-level occupancies as structurally flexible as possible, to afford diversity and adaptability of both tenancy size and use. For example, the considered location of load-bearing columns and walls, lifts, stairs, and services can maximise the opportunities for different tenancy sizes and layouts.

Reference exemplars demonstrating flexible internal street-level layouts include the Substrate Factory, with an open plan street-level tenancy, partitioned into smaller compartments with sliding shoji screens, and carefully considered exposed services, affording adaptation for a variety of uses (figure 7.16); George Corner, with an open plan with a services 'pod', and internal sliding dividers, suited to studio apartment, studio office, or small shop or café use (figure 7.4, 7.15); the Grimwade Centre which has open-plan work and exhibition spaces with exposed services, high ceilings and removable internal screening and partitions, also affording adaptation for different uses (figure 7.6); and Palma Hideaway house with wide span structure and non-loadbearing internal partitions (figure 7.5, 7.15).



Internal sliding partitions afford flexibility of street-level occupancy and use, Substrate Factory, Tokyo

Figure 7.16 Nimble occupation: flexible interior morphology
Photos: © Kenta Hasegawa

Flexible porosity

A porous border affords visual, and/or physical and sensory engagement at the public/private interface, whereas fixed transparent glass is a rigid boundary (Sennett 2011). Further, active frontage codes requiring expansive areas of transparent glazing privilege commercial exchange, and may limit affording other uses, including production and other forms of work, and street-level residences. Transparency *may* be manipulated; as Dovey (2016, p.67) notes, 'changes of transparency are the easiest to effect and to reverse, often on a daily rhythm'. For example, drawn blinds and closed security shutters are commonly employed to temporarily adjust transparency. However, while these devices afford differing degrees of privacy and/or security, it can be argued that they may also limit other affordances offered by transparent glazing; for

example, a drawn blind provides privacy for the occupants but blocks daylight and views between inside and outside (and vice versa). Fixed, transparent shopfront glazing also limits the flexibility to quickly adapt street-level building use.

Reference exemplars which demonstrate alternative strategies for mediating the visual porosity (transparency) and physical porosity (permeability) of the street-level public/private interface, affording diversity of building use, include the *operable porosity* of Substrate Factory's sliding external screen system (figures 7.3, 7.17) and the functional perforated entry screens of Palma Hideaway House (figure 7.5, 7.15). *Adaptable porosity* is demonstrated by the George Corner project where the planter boxes are designed to be removable (figure 7.4). *Transformable porosity* may be possible at the Grimwade Centre, where the perforated screens could be detached to expose more glazing, and additional entries inserted via the 'framed' windows, affording alternative uses for the street-level workshops (figure 7.6).



Sliding screens provide adjustable transparency/privacy, porosity, daylight and solar penetration, Substrate Factory, Tokyo

Figure 7.17 Flexible porosity: operable porosity
Photos: © Kenta Hasegawa

Flexible porosity façade tactics may also be employed to modulate environmental conditions (i.e. solar and daylight penetration, and natural ventilation), affording interior climate control not offered by transparent fixed glazing, and potentially also affording diversity of use. For example, the perforated screens of the Grimwade Centre reduce solar gains to the west facing façade while maintaining filtered daylight and views to the interior workspaces (figure 7.6).

Considered 'blankness'

The data from the Forrest Hill case study research indicates that blankness is not *always* 'bad' by demonstrating that sections of blank or non-activated façade may support stationary and lingering activities. Blankness may be 'considered' (figure 7.18 right), in contrast to blankness as an 'ill-considered,' or neglected, void or absence (figure 7.18 left).



'Ill-considered' blankness
Forrester Hill, Melbourne



Deliberate, 'considered' blankness
Collingwood, Melbourne. DKO Architects.

Figure 7.18 Forms of blankness

Analysis of the reference exemplars reveals different forms of considered blankness, potentially supporting a variety of physical and sensory affordances. For example, the El Ninot Market demonstrates *temporal* blankness, with lowered textured panels providing a visually interesting street-wall when the market is closed (figure 7.7). At the Ian Potter Southbank Centre, the blankness of the street-level façade frames deep *punctuations*, carefully located to suit a diversity of viewing heights, affording intrigue and curiosity, and urban play (figure 7.8, 7.19 right); the *crafted* blank timber panels of the 't Atelier workshops afford visual and tactile sensory experience (figure 7.9); and the *sculptural* extruded, faceted blue façade panels of the Europe Centre afford informal seating and an urban artwork (figure 7.10, 7.21 right, 7.22 centre). *Green blankness*, used as a facade strategy at the Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, provides a soft, 'tactile' edge, supporting diverse sensory affordances, in addition to affording environmental and biophilic benefits (figure 7.11).



Loose blankness affords appropriation and informal uses,
Emergency Scenery Shelter



Punctuated blankness affords
urban play, Ian Potter Southbank

Figure 7.19 Considered blankness: loose and punctuated
Photos: Left: © José Hevia, Right: © Dan Pike

'Loose' considered blankness is non-determined, affording a diversity of users and use. While many forms of considered blankness might be 'loose,' as they allow for appropriation and informal uses, an exemplar which demonstrates 'deliberate' looseness is the Emergency

Scenery Shelter (figure 7.19 left). This project was designed to afford structural support (to the adjoining building), and a rain shelter; however, the architects also envisaged that the open, non-determined spaces created might afford ‘backdrop scenery’ for the diverse performances of urban life (Unparelled’ architectes 2020).

Close encounter

As previously noted, the term ‘close encounter architecture’ was coined by Gehl for street-level frontages where there is the opportunity to look and touch (Gehl, Kaefer and Reigstad 2006). The considered detail design of frontages can afford sensory experiences, and contribute to user perceptions of urban quality and security. For this research, the term close encounter is widened to encompass not only materials and details, but also other frontage attributes that contribute to street-level experiential qualities i.e. facade depth and articulation, and lighting.

Facade depth and articulation

Conventional glazed shopfronts are, typically, linear and flat, and can read as a ‘thin’ surface treatment, lacking depth or substance. The Forrest Hill case study research demonstrated that street-level frontages comprised of standard aluminium framed commercial shopfront glazing contributed to an atmosphere that sensory walk-along participants described as ‘dull and boring’. Alternatively, facades with visual depth, and non-linear and/or ‘sculpted’ facades may afford more engaging atmospheres at street level; for example, the zigzag of the façade screen of the Grimwade Centre forms a dynamic backdrop to the landscaped frontage (figure 7.6, 7.20 right); the folded form of the Europe Building façade creates alcoves affording sheltered seating (figure 7.10, 7.21 right, 7.22 centre); and the sculpted reveal of the oculus window of the Ian Potter Southbank Centre invites informal occupation (figure 7.20 left).



Folded, sculptural facade with deep reveals
Ian Potter Southbank Centre, Melbourne



Dynamic frontage, Grimwade Centre,
Melbourne

Figure 7.20 Close encounter: facade depth and articulation
Photos: Right: © Emily Bartlett

Considered materials and detailing

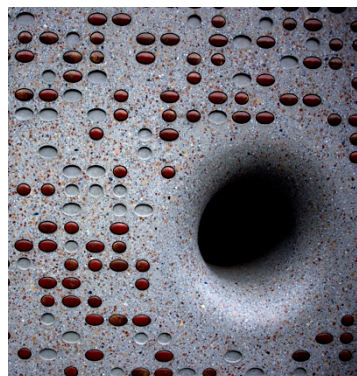
All the reference exemplars demonstrate material and detail finesse, contributing to perceptions of urban quality and affording both visual and tactile sensory experiences. The Ian Potter Southbank Centre demonstrates the use of timeless, high quality materials (burnished face-finish concrete, glazed ceramic tiles) in a creatively ‘crafted’ manner (figure 7.21 centre). Gusheh (2019, p.51) describes the tactile sensation of the street-level wall:

‘The material condition is now intimately felt. Hands instinctively fold over smooth curved frames and then extend out to trace the undulating skin. Oval figures, perfectly pressed into the concrete surface, pattern the façade, many of them crowned with domed ceramic discs – reddish, glistening and impossibly tactile. The experience intimates a warm, spontaneous exchange between the inner life of this architecture and those that surround it’.

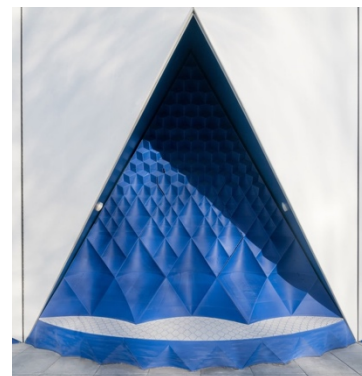
George Corner (figure 7.4, 7.21 left) and t’Atelier Workshops (figure 7.9) both employ natural timber finishes and fine detailing, affording tactile and visual sensory affordances. The recyclable, 3D printed façade panels of the Europe Building presents a different strategy i.e. employing new materials and technologies in inventive ways to afford change and adaptability, while also affording tactile and visual interest (figure 7.21 right).



Finely detailed timber, steel and concrete
George Corner, Melbourne



Crafted concrete and glazed ceramic discs
Ian Potter Southbank, Melbourne



Extruded, faceted, recyclable plastic panels
Europe Building, Amsterdam

Figure 7.21 Close encounter: considered material and details

Photos: Right: © Ossip Van Duivenbode

Integrated facade lighting

The ‘eyes on the street’ principle of passive surveillance underpins active frontage policies and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies. Gehl (2010, p.98) also observes the important contribution light spilling from shopwindows into the street can make to ‘the feeling of security when darkness falls’. However, blank, unoccupied retail shopfronts do not afford ‘eyes on the street’, and typically they are not illuminated at night. It could therefore be argued that considered lighting of the street-level public realm may afford greater perceptions of safety than blank, unoccupied retail shopfronts.

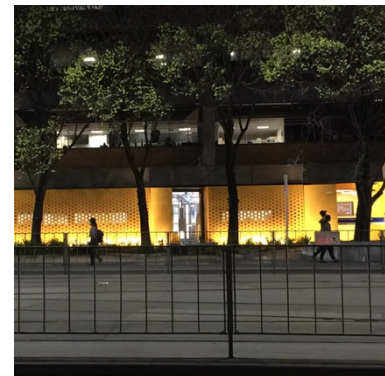
Investigating the role lighting plays in perceptions of safety in the urban environment, Van Rijswijk and Haans (2018, p.890) reference studies that reveal that when people are asked about the environmental factors that affect their sense of safety ‘they more frequently mention the presence of lighting, than, for example, the presence of other people or having an open view’. Employing considered, integrated façade lighting to afford perceptions of safety at street-level is an alternative strategy to standard street lights and security flood-lighting. In addition to affording perceptions of security, illumination levels and types contribute to sensory affordances, create memories, and contribute to atmospheres.



Lighting the public ‘living room’
Emergency Scenery Shelter, Olot



Highlighting details
Europe Building, Amsterdam



Affording perceptions of security
Grimwade Centre, Melbourne

Figure 7.22 Close encounter: integrated facade lighting
Photos: Left: © José Hevia, Centre: © Ossip Van Duivenbode

Exemplar projects that demonstrate considered external lighting strategies include the Emergency Scenery Shelter where pendant light fittings provide illumination with a ‘domestic’ ambience to the exterior ‘living room’ of the street, and highlight the textured materiality of the facade (figure 7.22 left); the Europe Building, with backlit translucent facade panels providing general lighting, while the details and bold colour of the niches are highlighted with focussed spotlighting (figure 7.22 centre); and the Grimwade Centre where light spills through the perforated screens (figure 7.22 right), and low-level directional lighting reflects off the perforated yellow panels, casting a warm glow, even when the internal spaces are not illuminated.

7.3 Tactics and design principles

Seeking non-normative alternatives to form-based active frontage codes promoting transparent retail shopfronts, this thesis proposes three Urban Design Strategies (see section 4.5) for street-level frontages that might maximise affordances enabling diversity of users, use, and sensory experiences.

The following diagram (figure 7.23) illustrates how the affordances offered by the alternative frontage design tactics discussed in section 7.2 might support these key Urban Design Strategies:

UD STRATEGIES	DESIGN TACTICS	AFFORDANCES
01 Enable street-level interfaces which afford a diversity of users and use	Flexible porosity	Operable, transformable, and/or adaptable porosity may afford diversity of street-level uses, and associated users
	Considered blankness	Considered blankness may afford opportunities for diversity of street-level uses, including non-commodified activities and informal occupation
	Nimble occupation	Flexible internal configurations and frontage designs may allow nimble adaptation, affording diversity of use, and associated users
	Close encounter	Considered materials/details and integrated facade lighting may afford perceptions of safety, supporting diversity of users
02 Optimise a variety of engagements between users, and between users and the street-level built interface	Flexible porosity	Operable, adaptable and/or transformable porosity may afford engagements between occupants and street-level the users
	Considered blankness	Considered blankness may afford diverse street-level engagement, including non-commercial uses, informal appropriation and self-expression
	Nimble occupation	Flexible hybrid interface zones may afford opportunities for diversity of engagements between occupants and street-level users
	Close encounter	Variations in facade depth and/or articulation may afford informal occupation, supporting diversity of engagements at the public/private interface
03 Enrich street-level sensory experiences	Flexible porosity	Operable porosity may afford visual, aural and olfactory connections between the street-level public realm and the building interior
	Considered blankness	Different forms of considered blankness may afford sensory experiences including visual, tactile, aural, olfactory (e.g. landscape) and kinaesthetic (e.g. movement, urban play)
	Nimble occupation	Flexible hybrid interface zones may afford nimble transformation, affording a diversity of sensory experiences
	Close encounter	Building articulation, materials, details and lighting may afford sensory experiences including visual, tactile, olfactory, aural and kinaesthetic (e.g. movement, urban play)

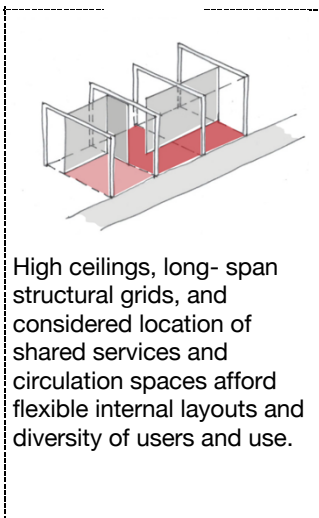
Figure 7.23 Alternative frontage design tactics supporting the key urban design strategies

Having linked the alternative frontage design tactics with the key urban design strategies, the next step is to consider design principles which could afford these alternative tactics. The purpose of the design principles is not to *determine* specific outcomes; rather, the goal is to *maximise a diversity of affordances*.

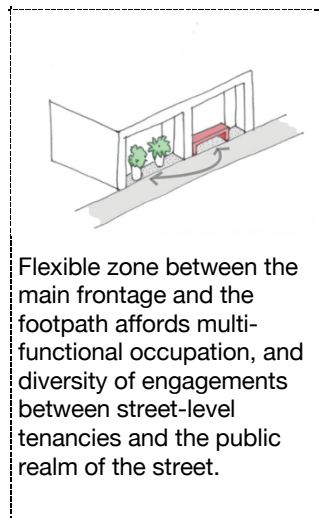
The following diagram presents thirteen possible design principles which might be applied to the design and assessment of strategies for the street-level interface, relating to the tactics of nimble occupation, flexible porosity, considered blankness, and close encounter (figure 7.24).

A. Nimble Occupation

A.1 Flexible internal layout

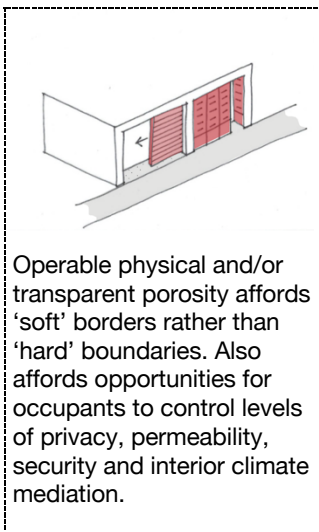


A.2 Flexible edge zone



B. Flexible Porosity

B.1 Operable porosity



B.2 Transformable/adaptable porosity

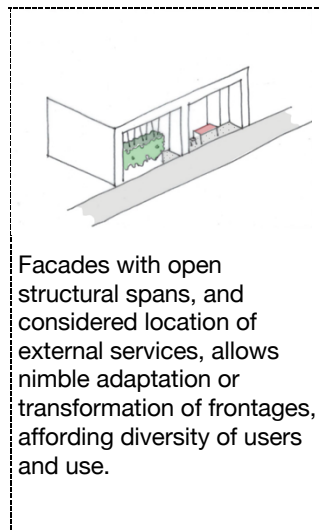
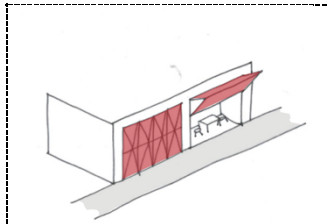


Figure 7.24 Design principles for 'non-standard' frontage designs.

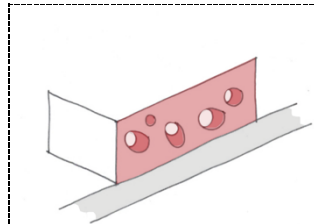
C. Considered Blankness

C.1 Temporal blankness



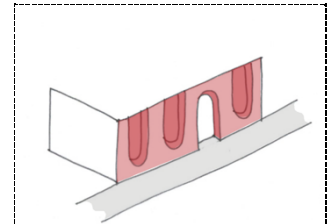
Temporal blankness may afford diversity of users and use by allowing temporal spatial appropriation. With considered details and materials may also support sensory affordances.

C.2 Punctuated blankness



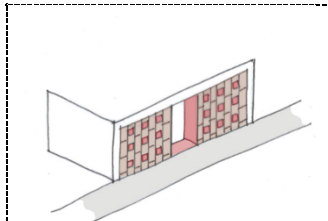
Punctuations in a 'blank' wall afford intrigue, and may afford lingering and diversity of engagements between users, and between users and the building e.g. urban play.

C.3 Sculptural blankness



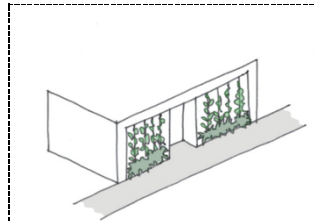
Sculptural blank frontages may afford diversity of uses and users through a diversity of engagement with the building frontage (e.g. informal seating, urban play). May also afford sensory experience.

C.4 Crafted blankness



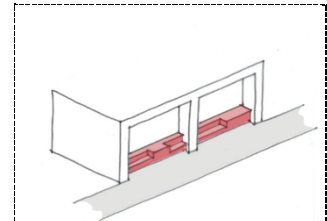
Crafted blank walls may support sensory affordances, and (by encouraging lingering to look and touch) a diversity of engagements.

C.5 Green blankness



'Living' blank walls afford soft edges, multi-sensory experiences, and environmental and biophilic benefits.

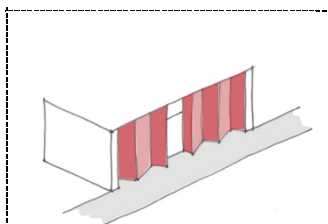
C.6 Loose blankness



Loose, 'unprogrammed' blank frontages may afford a diversity of uses and users, and a diversity of engagements.

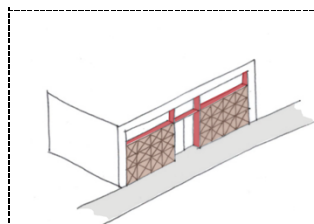
D. Close Encounter

D.1 Façade depth/articulation



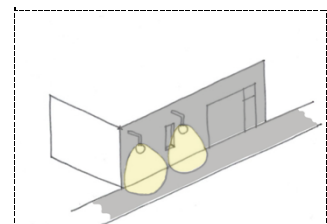
Variation in facade depth and articulation affords sensory engagement between users and the building fabric, and may also afford a diversity of engagements between users.

D.2 Considered materiality



Considered materials and detailing of blank walls support sensory affordances (visual and tactile); robust materials and details afford diversity of users and use (e.g. seating, urban play).

D.3 Integrated façade lighting



Integrated façade lighting affords perceptions of safety and security, affording diversity of users of the public realm of the street. Considered lighting may also afford sensory experiences.

Figure 7.24 continued. Design principles for 'non-standard' frontage designs.

7.4 Conclusions

The investigation of the selected exemplars of non-standard frontage design has identified design tactics which may conceivably afford diversity of users, use, and sensory experiences, supporting vital street-life. These tactics, grouped into four key themes i.e. nimble occupation, flexible porosity, considered blankness, and close encounter, offer alternative strategies to form-based active frontage codes requiring extensive areas of transparent glazing.

The exemplar review did not seek to create a pattern book of 'ideal' types, and the exemplar analysis reveals that there is no single 'ideal' type or solution; rather, each of the selected exemplar projects demonstrates *multiple* alternative tactics.

The affordances attributed to frontage strategies and tactics are speculated; however, although the actualisation of affordances has not been corroborated by urban research data, this speculation has been useful in generating a series of design principles that might be applied to the design and assessment of urban street-level interfaces. In the final discussion chapter, these design principles inform a 're-imagining' of street-level public/private interfaces within the Forest Hill case study area.

8.0 Discussion and conclusions

8.1 Discussion

This research originated from a concern, arising from observations as a practicing architect, about the widespread adoption of normative active frontage codes requiring expansive transparent retail frontages, and the promotion of ‘active everywhere’ as a strategy for street-level interfaces, including in locations beyond main shopping streets. This concern, reflecting on potentially negative impacts on the street-level public realm, initiated a move from architect-in-practice to architect-in-research, and informed the first objective of this study i.e. to understand the effectiveness of active frontage codes in affording an interactive, vital street-life.

The literature review has confirmed wide acceptance of the premise that there is a strong relationship between the diversity and complexity of street-level building uses, users, and social engagements, and street-life vitality; further, street-level stationary and lingering activities support social interactions. Jane Jacobs’ (1961/2011) ‘eyes on the street’ principle - where passive surveillance of the public realm affords perceptions of safety, encouraging more people to use the street, increasing opportunities for interaction – remains important. For Jacobs (*ibid.*, p.47) the ‘great street watchers’ in her Greenwich Village neighbourhood were storekeepers and proprietors of small storefront businesses. However, more recently, disruptions to traditional ‘bricks and mortar’ retail have significantly impacted on street-level tenancy occupancy; and empty transparent shopfronts, or ‘ghost-shops’ (Ziffer 2019), do not afford ‘eyes on the street’.

A key focus, therefore, is to understand the impacts of active frontage codes on affordances supporting social interactions, including opportunities for non-commodified social exchange. This investigation was conducted within a conceptual framework informed by affordance theory which provides a platform for understanding the spatial-socio-sensory characteristics of street-level frontages, and for exploring alternative strategies. The affordance framework encompasses both physical opportunities (or constraints) and sensory affordances, or atmospheres i.e. looking beyond socio-spatial interactions to also include sensory experiences.

An outcome of the literature review was the proposal of three key urban design strategies for street-level frontages to afford street-life vitality:

- 01. Enable street-level interfaces which afford a diversity of users and use.**
- 02. Allow a variety of engagements between users, and between users and the street-level built interface.**
- 03. Enrich street-level sensory experiences.**

Considering the impact of active frontage codes on street-level affordances supporting street-life vitality, the Forrest Hill exploratory case study research has been useful in understanding physical affordances in relation to street-level interface types. For example, form-based codes for street-level frontages within the precinct promote 'continuous active frontages incorporating clear transparent glazing' (City of Stonnington 2007, 2017); however, the recorded level of vacancy associated with transparent 'active' frontages demonstrates that conventional glazed shopfronts may not afford the flexibility of frontage design required to support alternative ground floor uses. Further, the land-use zoning codes affecting the case study precinct require a planning permit for non-retail uses, including ground-floor office and residential uses with a frontage width greater than 2-metres, and for other uses such as small-scale manufacturing studios or workshops, thereby eroding affordances to quickly (and economically) change from one use to another. The findings of this thesis support the argument that *flexibility*, both of allowable street-level uses and frontage design, is a key prerequisite for affording diversity of use and users.

The case study data also shows that not all transparent 'active' frontages elicit interest from passers-by, and that during the observation periods lingering activities and actualised 'unconventional' affordances predominately occurred next to blank or 'non-standard' frontages (i.e. those having less than 60%-80% transparent glazing), rather than in relation to transparent 'active' frontages (those with 60%-80% transparent glazing). This is, in part, contrary to findings from public life studies conducted by Gehl Architects (Gehl 2010, p.79) that have recorded the level of activity in front of 'active' façades as being seven times higher than in front of 'passive' façades. However caution must be applied when making this comparison because the referenced Gehl street-life study was conducted in central Copenhagen where ground-floor uses are dominated by retail. Further, the study was completed in 2003 when disruptions to traditional retail from e-commerce were not as significant.

Along with data about behaviours associated with frontage types, the case study investigation of sensory affordances, or atmospheres, provides a supplementary, qualitative tool for understanding and analysing street-level interfaces. 'Sensorial urbanism' is an established field of research; however, to date, there has been limited investigation into user perceptions of street-level 'active' frontages, with existing research focussing on visual perception, using photo comparison ranking (Heffernan, Heffernan and Pan 2014) or eye-tracking (Spanjaar and Suurenbroek 2020), rather than examining multi-sensory experience. This study adapts Pink's (2014, 2015) video-sensory ethnography method, where the researcher records and the participant 'does,' to enable a low-impact, 'low-tech', participant controlled tool for recording multi-sensory responses during the accompanied 'walk alongs'.

While based on a small sample, the case study 'walk-alongs' indicate that perceived atmospheres in relation to standard transparent 'active' frontages typically 'felt dull and boring'. The sensory affordances were not only impacted by the lack of activity at these frontages; responses indicate that the flat glazed surfaces, monotonous colours, and quality of materiality, detailing, and maintenance also contributed to the perceived non-vital atmosphere. In contrast, examples of non-standard frontages, demonstrating considered blankness and/or tactile materials, elicited interest and sometimes prompted appreciative comments from participants. This part of the research is still exploratory; however, the method opens up a pathway for understanding user perceptions of sensory affordances associated with different frontage types and designs. Additional research, with a larger sample of participants, would be useful to further examine the impacts of frontage design on sensory affordances and perceived atmospheres.

In sum, the data from the Forrest Hill exploratory case study indicates that active frontage codes promoting transparent glazed retail shopfronts are *not* always effective in affording physical and sensory vitality at street-level. While limited to a single case study, the research provides insights that are relevant for other urban areas. Further research, in other precincts - within Melbourne and in other cities - that align with the case study selection criteria, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of active frontage codes on affordances.

The second research aim was to explore alternative strategies to active frontage codes prescribing transparent shopfronts by asking: *what forms of street-edge morphology, and/or function, might be more effective than prescribed transparent retail frontages in affording street-life vitality?*; and *'what urban design strategies and tactics could afford these alternative street-level interfaces?* To address these objectives of 'what' and 'how', global exemplars of alternative strategies and tactics for the governance and design of street-level frontages were investigated, including speculation about potential affordances. Although urban research has not been conducted to examine whether the speculated affordances were actualised, the exemplar analysis did provide useful insights. The following key themes emerged for alternative tactics that, conceivably, might afford diversity of use, users, and sensory experiences:

- *Nimble occupation* - flexible land-use zoning codes and frontage built-form codes, and flexible ground floor interior and exterior morphology and 'hybrid' edge zones, may afford nimble (i.e. rapid and uncomplicated) adaptation for occupation by a diverse range of building uses, thereby affording diversity of street-level users.
- *Flexible porosity* - operable, transformable and adaptable street-level facades may allow occupants to mediate visual and/or physical porosity at the public/private interface, thereby affording different street-level uses and users; maximising opportunities for engagements

between building occupants and street-level users; and affording sensory connections between the building interior and the street-level public realm.

- *Considered blankness* – when part of a mix, pockets of ‘considered’ blankness may afford stationary and lingering activities, enabling street-life vitality. Six forms of considered blankness were discussed. For example, ‘loose’ blankness may afford opportunities for non-determined and diverse street-level uses, and users, including informal appropriation for non-commodified uses; while vegetated ‘green’ blankness may also afford multi-sensory affordances, and environmental and biophilic benefits. When linked to the detailed consideration of ‘close encounter’ facade design, temporal, punctuated, sculptural and crafted blankness may afford opportunities for social interaction by encouraging people to linger, and afford a diversity of sensory engagements with the building fabric.
- *Close encounter* – considered facade articulation, materials and detailing may afford sensory engagements between street-level users and the building fabric, and may also afford diversity of informal occupation and use. Integrated facade lighting may afford perceptions of safety and security, also affording diversity of users and use.

There is concurrence between aspects of these tactics and Bobić’s (2004) interface typology. For example, Bobić’s *overlapped* type (ibid; p 95), where the public and private domains are overlaid behind the building line, including *alcoves* and *niches* that spatially and visually extend public space and can be occupied; this resonates with the idea of hybrid, flexible edge zones that afford *nimble occupation*. There are also commonalities between *considered blankness* tactics and Bobić’s *confronted* type, where the building frontage is the interface. Bobić (ibid., p.101) proposed, comparable to *considered blankness*, that architectural elements, textures, materials, murals, and landscaping features can ‘soften’ *confronted* interfaces, and create a ‘psychological transition’ that is not exclusive in the way that security cameras can be. However, for Bobić, *confronted* interfaces mark the point where ‘starkly contrasting domains, or territories, ‘face each other in hostility or defiance’ (ibid.); whereas the *considered blankness* tactics recognise that although blank interfaces may not provide interactions between the building interior and the street, they can afford other forms of engagement *within* the public realm.

A series of design principles was presented (section 7.3), supporting the three key urban design strategies (section 8.1), and illustrating the *nimble occupation*, *flexible porosity*, *considered blankness*, and *close encounter* tactics. It is useful to reflect on how the application of these urban design strategies, tactics, and design principles might afford alternative outcomes for the street-level public realm within the Forrest Hill case study site, and speculate on how alternative frontage designs might be actualised. As Mitrović (2016) notes, design speculation is a way of ‘expanding the horizon of our observations’.

The flexibility to quickly adapt from one use to another, thereby affording diversity of use and users, is currently constrained within the Forrest Hill case study area by land-use zoning impacting on street-level uses, and frontage built-form codes affecting exterior morphology (section 6.2). In some cases, existing 'rigid' interior morphology may also impact on nimble adaptation. Further, sensory affordances and atmospheres are impacted by the lack of activity associated with many of the existing standard transparent 'active' shopfronts, and their materiality. Applying the design principles, examples of re-imagined, alternative scenarios for interfaces that may maximise a diversity of affordances are illustrated in figures 8.1 and 8.2.

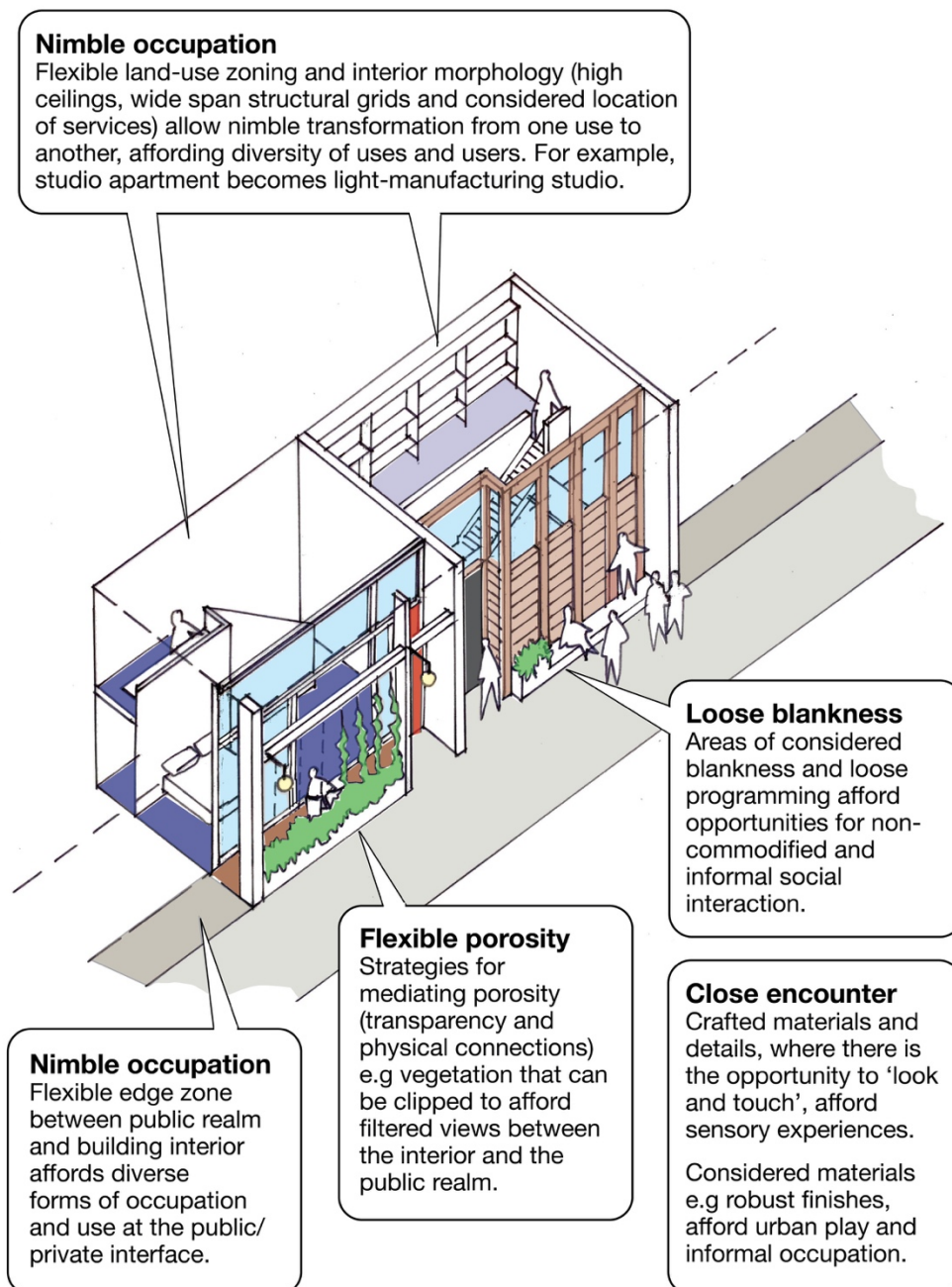


Fig 8.1 Re-imagined frontage within the Forrest Hill case study area: daytime

Recognising that frontage design impacts street-level occupation, thereby influencing diversity of uses and users, the re-imagined interfaces employ strategies that afford flexibility of both program and structural/material expression, to allow 'nimble' adaptation and transformation. The strategies might also support a mix of uses by providing flexible edge zones that support diverse forms of occupation, and afford opportunities for occupants to mediate interface porosity; for example, operable porosity may afford both street-level living and non-residential uses. Pockets of unprogrammed 'considered' blankness may afford opportunities for lingering activities and non-commodified social interaction, including urban play and self-expression.

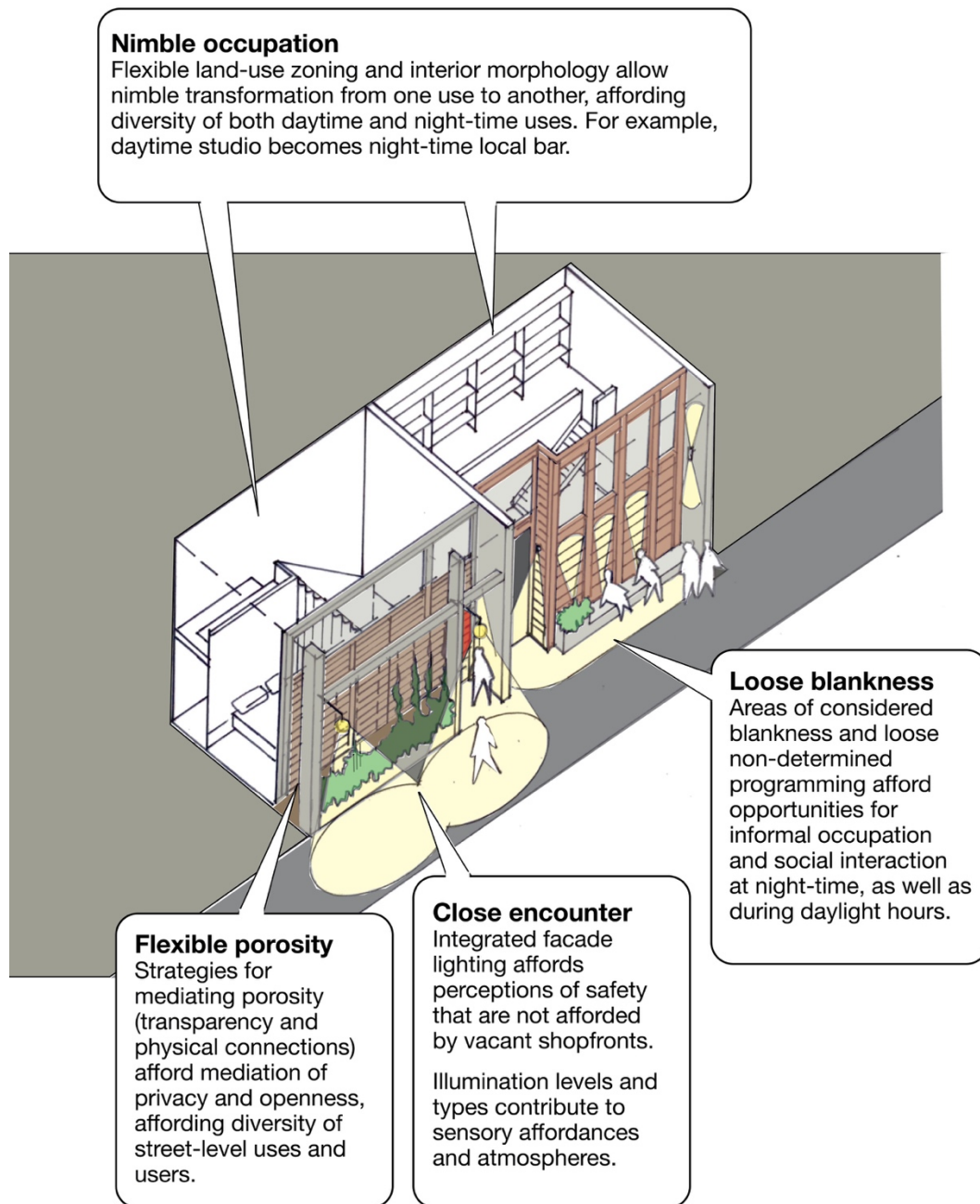


Fig 8.2 Re-imagined frontage within the Forrest Hill case study area: night-time

Further, the 're-imagined' Forrest Hill frontages may afford the public realm with a greater diversity of sensory experience than is offered by the existing facades of fixed, flat shopfront glazing, and poorly considered services enclosures. For example, employing materials and details at eye and hand level that afford visual and tactile interest, and carefully integrated facade lighting that contributes to sensory affordances and atmospheres, while also affording perceptions of security.

While re-imagining is a speculative exercise that is somewhat subjective, and affirmative of our own 'world view', there is value in 'what-if' re-thinking and speculation. In this research relating to street-level frontages, the value lies in re-imagining without the constraints of current planning codes, developer driven briefs, or the neo-liberal market forces that shape our cities (Theodore, Peck and Brenner 2012). This 're-imagining' method has links to design research in practice, where ideas are iteratively tested and developed, and could be applied in other street-level contexts beyond the case study. It is also a tool to initiate dialogue within practice i.e. illustrations of the speculative application of alternative tactics, that challenge preconceptions about transparent 'active' frontages being the 'best solution', provide context to assist with conversations across the urban design, planning, and architectural disciplines about different possibilities. This pathway for disseminating research findings to other practitioners, in a form other than written reports, can assist with achieving a key goal of ensuring that research knowledge directly benefits both everyday practice and future research projects (RIBA 2013).

8.2 Conclusions and contributions

This research provides an affordance-based analysis framework and methodology that could be applied to the investigation of street-level public/private interfaces in other urban areas. The mixed-methodology builds on existing methods for studying frontages, employing morphology mapping (including functional-mix and frontage types), behaviour observations to gain an understanding of synergies between affordances and frontage types, and accompanied walk-alongs/video ethnography to investigate users' sensory perceptions in relation to frontage types. The land-use and morphology mapping and behaviour observation methods employed are well-established techniques, and commonly utilised by urban researchers and practitioners (Gehl and Svarre 2013; Mehta 2019); however, the methodology adapts existing frontage typology classification systems and sensory ethnography methods to better suit the focus of this research i.e. to gain an enhanced understanding of the impacts of active frontage codes on the street-level public realm.

First, the development of an adapted frontage typology method, as a key tool for the investigation of affordances associated with different frontage types. Gehl's (2006) frontage

evaluation grading scale rates transparent glazing as 'active' while non-transparent windows and any form of facade blankness are classified as 'blind or passive'. Bobić's (2004) 7-part interface (with 40 sub-types) typology focuses on transition spaces and entrances, with 26 additional interface detail types which include 'large street window' but do not specifically address variations in glazing area or transparency. Dovey and Wood's (2018) 5-part typology, based on the key variables of permeability, transparency, setback and car-dependency, provides a more nuanced understanding of street-level frontages than Gehl's continuum, and represents the complexities of interface spatial relationships in a more robust (and user-friendly) way than Bobić's somewhat complicated classification system. This research concurs with the Dovey/Wood approach to classifying interface types; however, whereas the Dovey/Wood typology considers the dynamics of frontage adaptation and transformation this study focusses on understanding relationships between frontage types and affordances (including but other than affordances supporting adaptation/transformation), and the impacts of active frontage codes on affordances. Therefore the adapted types vary from the Dovey/Wood method. For example, the adopted *transparent 'active'* type actualises code requirements for 60 -80% glazing (although, in reality, it may be neither 'active' nor – if binds or film have been added – transparent), thereby differing from the Dovey/Wood *direct transparent* type which actualises visual transparency.

Second, the modification of existing sensory 'walk-along' and video ethnography methods, where the participant 'does' and the researcher 'records' (Kusenbach 2003; Degen and Rose 2012; Pink 2014, 2015), to more effectively capture users' multi-sensory perceptions of sensory affordances offered by different frontage types. Although still exploratory, the 'hybrid' method employed, where the walk-along participant makes their own audio and visual recording using a 'smartphone' worn on a lanyard, may help reduce researcher bias, and help capture a more authentic representation of users' experience during the research event. This method may also provide a more nuanced understanding of users' perceptions of urban quality relating to frontage types than existing occularcentric techniques, such as photo comparison and eye-tracking.

In sum, the mixed-methodology developed for this research, combining mapping, observations, and walk-along recordings, employs 'low-technology' techniques that do not require sophisticated equipment, and can be actioned by a single researcher. By adapting existing methods to better address the questions pertinent to this research into street-level frontages, this study adds to the current urban research toolkit.

Next, turning to the implications of this research for urban design, planning, and architecture practice. While this research has identified that active frontage codes are not *always effective* in affording street-life vitality, this thesis doesn't suggest that clear transparent 'active' frontages

are *always ineffective*; rather, it recognises that they can still have an important role to play, particularly in main retail strips which may still have the capacity to support destination services and 'experience' shopping. However, the findings challenge the 'default' adoption of normative active frontage codes requiring expansive transparent shopfronts, especially in 'off-corridor' secondary streets that are peripheral to main retail shopping streets.

Seeking an alternative approach to transparent 'active' frontages, this research investigated non-standard strategies for street-level public/private interfaces, and referenced these in a re-imagining of frontages within the case study area (section 8.1). Re-imagining may be 'interventionist', if it focuses on what 'ought' to be; however this thesis rests on the premise that urban design is both an assessment process (involving analysis and evaluation), *and* a speculative undertaking, where the goal is to maximise (rather than limit or erode) affordances. Therefore, the focus should be on affording '*what if*' and '*what might be*', rather than '*what ought or should be*'. This requires an experimental approach that challenges and disrupts the 'status quo' in order to afford different opportunities, where – for this research – the status quo is form-based active frontage controls. This thesis supports the application of an experimental mindset to both the governance and design of street-level frontages. As Marshall (2018, p.20) observes:

An experimental 'mindset' [...] can look beyond what is known and what can be seen, to explore new possibilities'.

The link between experimentation and innovation is a key concept in both the physical and social sciences; there can be no innovation without experimentation. Dovey (2016, p.63), however, raises the point that, like experimentation, innovation does not always produce successful outcomes.

The design of the public-private interface is a crucial dimension of architectural practice, and while innovation should be promoted, it can also fail'.

Failure in the street-level public realm may be difficult to define; the question arises: failure for whom? Is it economic failure for business; or functional failure for users; or social failure for the public realm? Fear of failure should not impede innovation; new knowledge comes from both *doing* and *failing*. I argue that if there is flexibility in the governance and design of the street-level interface, framed with an experimental 'mindset', then, if failure does occur, this flexibility allows new possibilities to be quickly tried and tested. As Sennett (1992, p.110) notes, modern architecture that privileges a specific program has resulted in a physical urban fabric that has become 'rigid and brittle'. In the context of this thesis, current governance (both land-use zoning and form-based active frontage codes) privileges street-level programs associated with retail uses; and transforming from one use, or one spatial or architectural expression, to another, can be slow, expensive (thereby potentially reducing diversity of use and users), and wasteful of resources. In other words, a 'rigid' approach, eroding affordances to nimbly adapt and change from one use to another, or to experiment and test new ideas.

In addition to showing the value of flexibility of governance and frontage design, the findings of this research suggest that street-level frontages that disrupt the homogeneity of standard glazed frontages can have merit. Non-standard frontages can afford a complexity and richness of sensory experience that can contribute to localised and contextual 'atmospheres'; as Gusheh (2019, p.51) observes, writing about John Wardle Architects' Ian Potter Southbank Centre (see figure 7.8), 'material texture and expression are critical to local character'. And while physical and visual porosity provide important connections between the building interior and the street, the findings of this research also support the argument that, as the Ian Potter Southbank Centre demonstrates, transparency and physical porosity need not be continuous; considered blankness can also play an important role in affording sites for lingering activities, social interaction, informal appropriation, and self-expression.

A counterargument might be raised about the role active frontage policy plays in affording public safety and preventing crime, based on the assertion that blankness does not provide passive surveillance. In response to this rationalisation, links can be made between surveillance and exclusion, resulting in spatial inequality (see also section 4.4). Sennett (Sendra and Sennett 2020, p.125) argues that a 'regime of surveillance', promoted by Jacobs, Newman and others, 'orders' people on the street, rather than 'gathering' them. However, while generally concurring with Sennett, this thesis also recognises that passive, or 'natural', surveillance of the urban public realm *can* contribute to perceptions of safety. The divergence of this thesis from the premise that active frontage policy promoting transparency affords safety is conveyed in the axiom that vacant shops do not provide 'eyes on the street'. This research suggests alternative frontage tactics – including considered forms of blankness - that may more effectively afford diversity of street-level uses, and users, than transparent shopfronts, and allow informal occupation at the public/private edge zone; thereby providing 'natural' surveillance through inclusive co-presence in the street, rather than relying on visual connections from the building interior.

Further, environmental conditions, such as levels of maintenance and the quality of illumination within the public realm, can impact on perceptions of safety. While not advocating for 'busy streets'²³ policy, this research suggests alternative close-encounter frontage design tactics, including considered materials and detailing, and integrated facade lighting to supplement more general street lighting, to afford enlivened street-level atmospheres that may be perceived as less intimidating, and encourage more 'eyes *in* the street'.

²³ In Busy Streets theory a community group takes 'ownership' of maintenance and elemental improvements within their neighbourhood with the aim of achieving economic and societal improvements (Aiyer et al. 2015). While this differs from Broken Windows policy, which relies on police cracking down on vandalism and other misdemeanours, the 'busy streets' approach does still target 'nuisance' crimes (graffiti, loitering etc.) so can be seen as another form of exclusion.

In sum, for the theory and practice of urban design, architecture and planning, the implication of this research is that alternative strategies to prescriptive form-based active frontage codes need to be considered. As observed in the Forrest Hill case study, successful cafés can activate their transparent facades, affording ‘lively’ atmospheres, and are often promoted as a strategy to provide facade activation; but cafés won’t work everywhere, and transparent shopfronts may limit affording alternative uses and sensory experiences. And while very long blank and non-transparent interfaces may be ‘deadening’, pockets of considered ‘blankness’ can contribute to street-life, if part of a mix.

This thesis is not suggesting complete deregulation of the street-level interface, but rather seeks a more critical, and contextual, approach to the framing and application of urban codes. That is, echoing Sennett’s call for the ‘open city’ (Sennett 2007; Sendra and Sennett 2020), a non-rigid, *open* framework that allows flexible – and even incomplete – solutions, affording possibilities for future adaptation; for innovative strategies and solutions to be trialled, and tested; and a broader range of assessment tools to be employed. As Bobić (2004, p.46) observed, a flexible regulatory framework allows transformations to happen at the public/private edge, or contact zone; whereas if the contact zone is strictly regulated ‘there is less chance that any progress in building urbanity will occur’.

Concluding with a recapitulation of the key contributions of this research: for urban research and theory this research builds on existing methods for studying frontages to provide a mixed-method, affordance-based analysis framework that could be applied to the investigation of street-level public/private interfaces in other urban areas. For urban design, planning and architecture, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the impact of active frontage codes on the street-level public realm; it also identifies alternative strategies and tactics for the design and governance of street-level interfaces that may more effectively afford street-life vitality than prescribed transparent ‘active’ frontages.

8.3 Significance and further research

A key significance of this thesis is that it asks new and important questions about active frontage codes, and the research findings challenge existing assumptions about the effectiveness of the transparent ‘active’ frontage strategy that has become a ‘default’ approach within current urban planning and urban design practice. This inquiry is especially pertinent at a time when impacts on the street-level public realm from e-commerce disruptions to traditional retail have been accelerated, and amplified, by reductions in ‘foot traffic’ associated with COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and altered working patterns (City of Melbourne 2020).

The findings of the Forrest Hill exploratory case study show that active frontage codes are not always effective in supporting street-life vitality. Further case study research, applying the affordance-based framework and a 'fine-tuned' methodology to other recently developed and emerging mixed-use urban areas in precincts peripheral to main shopping strips in Melbourne, and other urban centres, will provide additional data for comparison, and allow a more comprehensive analysis of the impacts of active frontage codes on affordances. Another interesting focus for future research is to better understand whether active frontage policies that originated in central business/activity centres are effective in other urban contexts. In Australia, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, with lockdowns limiting movement and requiring remote working-from-home arrangements, saw a shift in activity from central business areas to local suburban activity centres (Mortimer, Grimmer and Maginn 2020), and an increase in the number of people migrating from the capital cities to the regions (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021). At the time of writing this thesis it is too soon to confirm if these trends will be sustained post-COVID; however, if these emerging trends prove resilient, future research would be useful to investigate whether different street-level frontage policies and design strategies might be more effective in affording street-life vitality in smaller urban and regional centres.

An opportunity also exists for further investigation of global exemplars of non-standard street-level frontage design, supported by urban research to validate whether the speculated affordances supporting diversity of street-level use, users, and sensory experience have, in fact, been actualised. The goal is not to create a pattern book of 'ideal' frontage types; reiterating Bobić's (2004) declaration, pattern books can encourage the homogenisation that this thesis stands against. Rather, the aim is to generate a resource affording discussion within urban design, planning and architecture practice about non-standard tactics for the design and governance of street-level public/private interfaces; a resource that doesn't merely critique the status quo of transparent 'active' frontage codes - it offers other possibilities.

Finally, another key significance of this thesis is that it challenges a polarity that can exist between academia and practice (Pert and Simpson 2017), where practitioners may disregard academia for 'not being in the real world' while academics see practice as affected and shaped by commercial constraints and market forces. By stepping from architect-in-practice to architect-in-research, and then taking new knowledge back into practice, practice informs research, through applied experience and embedded 'knowing', and research informs practice, by introducing systematic scholarship and methods. This pathway also affords communication to a broad audience outside academia, specifically practitioners in planning, urban design and architecture. While this transfer of knowledge includes useful research methods and results, this thesis also breaks down barriers between research and practice by demonstrating the value of

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Appendices

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Appendix A: Melbourne case study scoping summary

				
Precinct	Nicholson St Brunswick East Between Holden St and Blyth St	Smith St Fitzroy/Collingwood Between Johnston St and Alexandra Pde	Southbank South Melbourne Coventry St /Wells St	Forrest Hill South Yarra Claremont St/Yarra Ln Yarra St/Daly St/
Location	5 km – 7 km north of Melbourne CAD	1.5 km north of Melbourne CAD	1.5 km south of Melbourne CAD	3 km southeast of Melbourne CAD
Emergent area with mix of recently completed developments	YES Several completed developments, typically 4 to 6-storeys Note: East Brunswick Village still under construction at time of scoping.	NO Area is emergent but limited number of completed developments (four)	NO Area is emergent but limited number of completed developments (six)	YES More than 30 developments completed since 2010, typically 20-storeys
Contiguous groupings of buildings	NO Fragmented i.e. 'island' sites with large gaps of predominately low rise buildings between developments	YES New developments are 'island' sites but existing buildings infill gaps between developments	YES Contiguous buildings with limited gaps	YES Contiguous buildings with limited gaps
Secondary or side streets peripheral to main shopping strips	NO Precinct is 'bookended' by small neighbourhood shopping strips (cnr of Nicholson St /Holden St, and cnr Nicholson St/Blythe St) but is located on main road	NO Precinct is located within the Smith St major activity centre, and is located on main road	NO Coventry and Wells St are secondary streets but are not proximate to main shopping strips	YES Precinct includes secondary streets peripheral to main shopping strips in Toorak Rd/Chapel St
Mix of uses, including commercial and residential	LIMITED Predominately residential with some commercial and retail uses at street level	YES Precinct includes mix of residential, retail and a mix of commercial uses	LIMITED Predominately residential with some retail uses at street- level	YES Precinct includes both residential and a mix of retail and commercial uses
Public transport	YES Located on Nicholson St tram routes	YES Located on Smith St tram routes	YES 5-minute walk to St Kilda Rd tram routes	YES 2 minute walk to South Yarra train station and Toorak Rd and Chapel St tram routes
Shared characteristics with other areas of recent mixed-use development	YES Shares characteristics with other development precincts located along main tram routes	YES Shares characteristics with other development precincts located along main tram routes	YES Shares characteristics with other development precincts located within 5-minute walk of main transport routes	YES Shares characteristics with other development precincts next to train stations/transport hubs

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Appendix B: Sensory walk-along transcripts

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Sensory walk-along
Saturday 13 April 2019 1.45pm – 2.15pm [duration: 39-minutes]
Weather conditions: mild, 20.5 degrees celcius, sunny, light breeze

EXPERT PARTICIPANT EP01

Male. Architect. Age group: 30-35 years.
European-Australian, Eastern European ancestry.



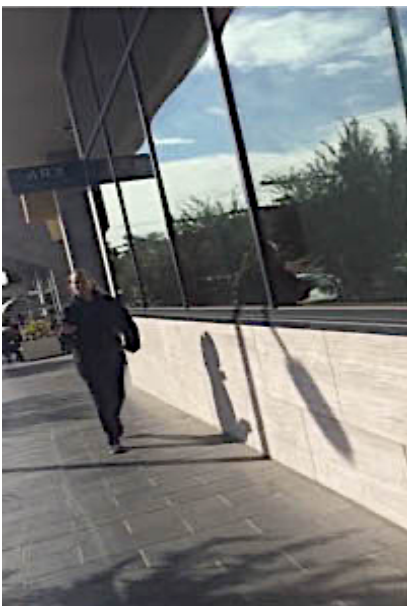
01.
'This is great... it's exactly what you want... but again, sunshine is key'.



02.
'I know it's kind of weird but I kind of like this...you know it's what makes the city, you've got this noise'.



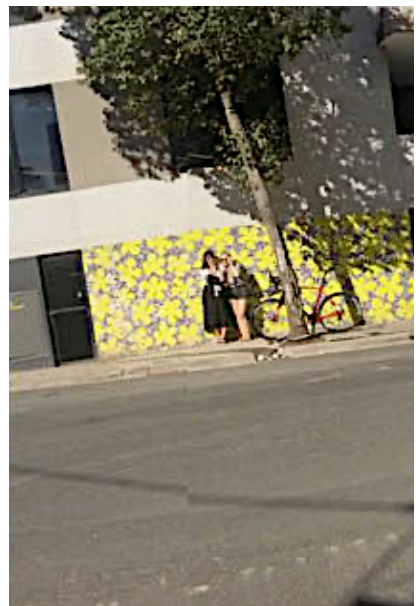
03.
'I do like this, I don't know whose decision this was, but having materials you can touch at ground floor, I think is pretty important'.



04.
Dead! Well... engineers... again, maybe it shouldn't be offices at ground floor, because you're going to guarantee that on the weekend it's going to be empty. [...] It depends on the tenant'.



05.
'...again I kind of prefer that [rubbish] to that... the clutter behind the glass, where it's turning its back to the street and this is like... signs of life, you know?'



06.
'I like that... it's kind of charming. It's a blank wall but they've done something with it, and I guess in the Instagram generation it's placemaking'.

Still images from the EP01 sensory walk-along video

Daly Street (heading west)

[Note: Recording cut out at the start and is missing for the first 3 - 4 minutes of the walk-along in Daly St. Notes of the discussions were recorded from memory immediately after completion of the walk-along]:

- [standing outside Le Louvre] talked about the character of the old building, and the memories associated with the original Le Louvre at the top end of Collins St.
- the rapid growth of a new precinct – associations with what has happened at Docklands, rather than organically evolving.
- Asian supermarket at 6 Daly Street with boxes inside stacked against the shopfront windows, and the issues with glazed frontages where there is no control over what the tenants do inside.
- Positive comments about Dily Daly café ('this is good')
- Looking to the multi-story level façade- screen 'softens it'. Wondered what would happen in the future...could the carpark be retrofitted for another use, like the apartment conversion of a carpark in the city designed by Breathe Architects? Likes the carpark signage.
- CM explained that the screen in front of the carpark was part of the new streetscape and landscaping works. EP01 observed that there didn't seem to be any Water Sensitive Urban Design features, such as swales.
- Pointed out a single bike hoop outside 6 Daly St – not many opportunities provided for bike parking, but queried perhaps it's not a great environment for cycling
- Paused outside Alchemy Cryotherapy, 6B Daly St. Glazed frontage with a commercial use that has limited opening hours so not giving so much back to the street, but perhaps it might improve when Capitol development completed and there are more people around..

[recording started again at west end of Daly St]

EP01: [Looking at vacant tenancy at 21 Daly St] Look at that.. that's just ridiculous, shoe-horned into the corner. [Looking at lease sign and through the window] 400 square meters...

CM: *George Colombaris had that for a while, then Zumbo did high teas.*

EP01: Ok! Clearly it was a roaring success! [laughs]. That a real shame, that whole thing...

EP01: [Looking at advertising material on the hoarding on the side of the laneway] I wonder if that's the friendly architect looking through the plans...or is it the client? I mean this is better than just having blank hoardings, even if it is just advertising. But I wonder what the other side is going to be, especially if this ends up being activated and they will be able to have that laneway they're going for?

CM: *They're going to have quite a wide set-back... one of the images right down the other end shows what it's going to be like, well... artist's impression...*

EP01: [Looking at image of atrium with steps leading up to entry] Well you're right... that's it, I think it will be great, I don't know if its Council's incentive or the architects' vision, but I guess if you think about activation I think people might... it's almost like the policy derives from empirical evidence that if everything is activated then there will be street life. But I wonder how that would compare to activated street-life... it's all kind of manufactured, versus maybe satellites of these sort of hubs like this, how that kind of works. I think that's probably more kind of successful because there's more effort put into it.. rather than that kind of café shoe-horned into the corner, when you think there's no sense of address. Who would actually want to eat there... but [indicating towards atrium perspective] you want to be here. I think those are draw-cards its worth focusing on.

EP01: [Indicating towards 9-11 Yarra St on west side of Yarra St] I think this is an awful building but it's pretty racy...

CM: *When this first opened, it used to be Duttons car showroom on the ground floor.*

EP01: That's right... I thought it was very racing car inspired.

CM: *That's true... I never thought of that.*

CM: *[Indicating vacant Zumbo tenancy] This closed at Christmas time.*

EP01: That's so sad. [Indicating towards sculpture outside Lilli, 12-14 Claremont St]. This is great... but unfortunately it does get vandalised.

EP01: [Walking past outdoor dining at Two Birds Café] **[Image 01]** This is great... it's exactly what you want... but again, sunshine is key. [Looking at services outside Lilli] But what do you do? Is there some way Council could mandate... not mandate, but have preference for where back of house or service entries are? Then you wouldn't have to have these things intermittently dotting the street. You know, you'd get a continuation of that [indicating towards Two Birds café frontage]. But how do you do it? it needs a masterplan so you localise where back of house entrances actually are.

EP01: [Crossing road, with a row of 5 concrete trucks lined up in front of the construction site at 6-8 Claremont St] **[Image 02]** I know it's kind of weird but I kind of like this...you know it's what makes the city, you've got this noise.

EP01: [Indicating towards 10 Claremont St] That's a Hayball project, I'm sure. I kind of like it. I admire its kit of parts, but it's pretty cold

EP01: [Walking past Manor House, 3-7 Claremont St] I do like this... I mean you get smaller interfaces, you get larger interfaces, and interfaces like this,, I can see people kind of appropriating this, for better or for worse...

CM: *[Walking past construction workers sitting on Manor sign] Sitting on the walls...*

EP01: Yeah! [laughs].

CM: *[Walking past 3 Claremont St] Another Asian supermarket.*

EP01: Yeah...and I mean, the tenant doesn't care... they don't care about active interface.. they care about putting their products on display, en masse...

CM: *We'll walk back down to Yarra Lane now, but what do you think about the atmosphere in this street?*

EP01: Diverse, very diverse...very urban in a way as well... I mean that's what happens...this urban...cacophony, where you get things jammed together in a tight space and you get interfaces that are more successful, and interfaces that are less successful...boosters and hydrants. But I just feel that this is all being developed in such a close period of time that there's a real opportunity to try and tweak the urban atmosphere to make it better, not so haphazard. I think haphazard is probably the word I would use to describe it.

CM: *So, it wasn't masterplanned...*

EP01: No, and I think it should be.. but then I think the active interface.. the glazing [requirement] is just so ridiculous. It should be discretionary, applying it. Again, it should be about good design, it shouldn't be about applying it.

CM: *[Indicating the glass box café in the forecourt of 3-7 Claremont St] That little café has had about 3 different tenants in the past couple of years.*

EP01: This one?... well [indicating the construction trucks] Think of the conditions its competing with! And also...again... how much sunshine does it get? Probably not much.

EP01: [Looking at old office chairs sitting against window in vacant looking tenancy at 7B Claremont St] That's very sad...

EP01:[Looking up at façade of Lilli, 12-14 Claremont St] I like that... it's not great, but it could be worse. [looking to upper level of 10 Claremont] You get the difference in textures, I like that... but I'm not sure how many people look up in the city... I guess they probably do. If you would look up any place then it would be in the city I think..

CM: *Some people do, some people are just looking where they are going.*

EP01:And they focus on the ground floor interface...is there any discussion, is there anything directed towards activation vertically?

CM: *Its becoming part of the conversation now... City of Stonnington have tried to say that the first 2 or 3 levels above street-level should be commercial use, not residential, to try and get that vertical mix above the street...*

EP01: Yeah... passive surveillance...

CM: *They haven't done it here [indicating to Lilli, 12-14 Claremont St]... it's podium carparking...*

EP01: Exactly. And also...some developments do excavate here, and... the ground conditions... it's not like they were locked in to that decision. It was probably directed by other things.

EP01: There does need to be more greenery... that's something that's really missing. And if you don't have an interface... the building... the trees offset it. It's like that in any city I can think of that I've been to around the world. That's very important. Because it's a one-way street so there's only so much you can do... but [indicating to east side of Yarra St which doesn't have carparking] in that footpath it's really important.

CM: *There are a lot of parked cars?*

EP01: Maybe they shouldn't have parked cars... I don't know...maybe it would then feel even emptier until it's all finished.

Yarra Lane (west)

CM: *We'll walk up Yarra Lane... have you been through here before?*

EP01: I have a while ago. Again, I guess it comes down to time of use and the particular tenant. But I like this... it's definitely more of a human scale. You've got podiums delineated from the towers above, different signage.

CM: *And one good thing... this is on private property but its open 24 hours, it's not gated.*

EP01:That's really good. Because when I actually think of this area, it's this street I think of. This particular cut through. And the proximity to the train I really like... I think again, that's what makes it urban. So how do you pick from the whole array of what makes a city a good city? How do you pick those characteristics and present them in such a way where it's not homogenous, but it's not so discordant that there's no sense of character?

CM: *Do you think character and atmosphere are kind of linked?*

EP01: Oh, definitely. I don't know how many people would stop and think... or, no maybe they would...when I think of this area, up until Zumbo closed last year, I did think... when I went down that street, and the bakery... that's what I think of. You know... the smells. That's probably the strength of having tenants like that.

CM: *[indicating to vacant tenancy on corner of Yarra Ln and Yarra St] That was quite a good café that closed last week.*

EP01: Oh yeah... I think Hecker Guthrie did the fit out, didn't they?

CM: *For the original tenant... I can't remember who that was, then Einstein's Relative Café took over. Terrible name but the coffee was quite good.*

EP01: [Looking at vacant tenancy] That's sad.

Yarra Street (walking south)

EP01: [Running hand along timber battens over glass window to Greedy Cat Kitchen, 1A 7 Yarra St] **[Image 03]** I do like this, I don't know whose decision this was, but having materials you can touch at ground floor I think is pretty important.

EP01: Even when you have smells that are a little bit unpleasant!

CM: *there's always that smell there.*

EP01: Maybe there is some kind of drainage...

CM: *[indicating high level exhaust vents above shopfront and carpark entries] I think it might be coming out of these vents.*

EP01: Oh yeah. And you know what... they're kind of unpleasant... but like the construction works, it's what makes it urban. Which is kind of funny... you can complain about the dead offices and the ugly carparks, but I almost prefer the bad smells and the construction workers to that because, you know...urban, you take the good with the bad. But not the dead!

CM: *It's part of urban life?*

EP01: Yes, absolutely. In fact, I wonder what it's going to be like when the construction stops. Which is really interesting... I don't see it stopping for the next 5 or 6 years, I don't think anyone will stop until all the buildings have been redeveloped.

CM: *That's right – there are still about 2 sites without permits, and 3 with permits still to be re-developed.*

EP01: Is that right? Do know when the whole Forrest Hill precinct began... I know it began at least a decade ago, because we worked with Kerrie [Phelan] on the interiors on SEE apartments...

CM: *It was about 12 years or so ago...*

EP01: [Indicating 7 + 9 Yarra St] because these were the first ones, right?

EP01: [Passing House of Lulu White Café, 4 Yarra St] This is quite...even the umbrellas, although they're daggy, they're quite charming. They work.

EP01: [pausing at recessed entry to apartments 3 Yarra St] And again, this works. Does look a little bit like Surfers Paradise [laughs], but it works. It totally works.

CM: *What do you think is successful about it?*

EP01: Well, especially since everything is so monotonous. You've got this consistent wall, and then you've got this little break-out space. And again, it's the sunlight. It's scale, interface.

EP01: [passing offices at 3 Yarra St] And also, I like the stone at ground level... it could so easily have been 'V-M' ed [value managed] to be flat pre-cast.

CM: *what about the rest of this façade?*

EP01: [Laughs] **[Image 03]** Dead! Well... engineers... again, maybe it shouldn't be offices at ground floor, because you're going to guarantee that on the weekend it's going to be empty.

CM: *Unless it's architects because they work all the time.*

EP01: Well... I was going to say... it depends on the tenant!

Yarra Street (walking north)

EP01: [Passing back past entry to 3 Yarra St] And again... is this a hotel, or just apartments?

CM: *Just apartments.*

EP01: You get people coming in and out... that's quite nice. [Looking up at façade above entry] It's kind of tacky and so superficial...when it's like... look it's two buildings, rather than one. But it's nice to look at from here.

EP01: [looking at traffic lined up in the street back from the corner of Toorak Rd] Is that traffic again held up because of the construction works?

CM: *No, I think it's just traffic waiting because you have to turn out against the traffic in Toorak Rd.*

EP01: I mean, the fact that this is a one way street - in Claremont and this street, I kind of like it..

CM: *This is 2 way – see that car going down, but it's very tight.*

EP01: Oh, you're right. But there is something about the scale of the streets that I kind of like.

CM: *Is it because it's more dense?*

EP01: It is more dense, you know... again, it's like some of those things that, some of those factors about what makes a good city and a good interface are organic and require time, and some of them can be forced. And I think the scale can definitely give it a big impetus.

EP01: [Looking at bamboo at entry to Yarra Ln] I do like this.

CM: *this bit of greenery?*

EP01: Yes. Again, similar to Surfer's Paradise... I think of that garden back there and I think of Surfers Paradise...that [the bamboo] I think is fantastic and hard wearing...but I think an acknowledgment that we do live in Australasia, and I wouldn't say its exotic but... we could have had some standard Stonnington trees there but you don't ...we have that, which I really like.

CM: *So the new buildings were required to widen the footpath, which is why we go from wide back to narrow down there.*

EP01: [pausing outside the raised front terrace to 14 - 16 Yarra St] But again, for what...widen it - but what about the interface? It's like a wall... it is a literal wall, and [pointing to signage of the glass balustrade on top of the wall] you have the signage on top of the wall! You can't see anything....

EP01: [walks up steps to raised terrace] And what actually is there?

CM: *It was a gym but it moved.*

EP01: F45... and that would be used around the clock as well at F45. [looks through front windows into empty space] That's very sad.

EP01: [Looking across to old red-brick signal box in centre of railway lines] I like that. Again, it's like Le Louvre, the charm... it needs to be protected at all costs.

EP01: [Back on footpath outside 12 Yarra St] What's this, this looks kind of peculiar.

CM: *It's a real estate agent's office.*

EP01: [indicating furniture, computers etc. pushed against windows] Again, this is like... could they not foresee that this would happen.

CM: *[indicating pile of rubbish outside window] This is interesting... yesterday there were 2 pieces of junk... it's that thing of rubbish attracts rubbish.*

EP01:[**Image 05**] Absolutely... but again I kind of prefer that to that... the clutter behind the glass, where it's turning its back to the street and this is like... signs of life, you know? [laughs].

EP01: And the footpaths are kind of pockmarked with crap... that's what I think of when I think of an interface... you know, imperfect.

CM: *so, does imperfect give more character?*

EP01: Totally, totally. You've got the construction workers, you've got the bad smell, the... like the weeds [passing empty planters in front of 14-16 Yarra St], and the rubbish on the corner. I think it adds to it.

CM:*[pausing outside 1960s building at 17 Yarra St] This is going to be demolished.*

EP01: Is it? that's a shame... it's such a shame.

CM: *[passing 18 Yarra St] This is another Bird de la Couer design.*

EP01: Is it? they scored big with these projects. I mean, I guess it'd be kind of ho hum, just a little bit sterile, the services are kind of hard.

CM:*[passing 3 storey building on the corner of Claremont and Yarra St] And this building will never be any higher because the developer has purchased the air-rights above it to preserve the views from his future development behind. So, the scale on this corner will stay the same.*

EP01: Of course he has. Well, I think that's kind of a blessing, even though it comes from a place of probably commercial interest, it's good.

Claremont Street north

EP01: And the open area is actually a private open space.

CM: *Melbourne High?*

EP01: Yes... and I've no doubt people have been eyeing that ... you know making deals, who to approach, because that land... [sound of AFL game being played on the oval]. The sounds of that.. that's great...

CM: *the sports?*

EP01: Yes... I would never play, but it's great! You know if I go to this area, the things I would associate it with – apart from the buildings - are Zumbo, the sounds of the trains and announcements, and footy. My Dad actually went here [Melbourne High] so every time I walk along here I associate it with that familiarity.

Claremont Street walking south

EP01: [Looking across at mosaic tile wall at 56-58 Claremont St] [**Image 06**] I like that... it's kind of charming. It's a blank wall but they've done something with it, and I guess in the Instagram generation it's placemaking.

CM: *this building is actually commercial. It has tenants like a sports physio, one office per floor. Then it steps up to the apartment building it joins to.*

EP01: Which is awful. But the scale of it...[looking at 2 girls taking selfies against the mosaic tile wall] there you go! The scale of it kind of works.

EP01: [Looking along the street] It's very diverse!

EP01: [Looking across to planter box to frontage of 50 -54 Claremont St] I mean the greenery's ok... I think it's all right. And I'm thinking about the old building on the other side, the one next to the one that's to be developed [14 - 16] I think it was painted blue and the glass is higher up... it has tiers of planter boxes that are dead, nothing in them... but I think that even that has more character than that apartment next to the one on the corner [18 Yarra St] because...I don't know, there's an intent. I guess it comes down to stewardship as well.

CM: *[Indicating 50-54 Claremont St] They've managed to contain the services under that planter as well.*

EP01: I know! How did they manage to do that?

[Walking past See Apartments, 45 Claremont St. Disclaimer: the practice where EP01 and the researcher worked together in the past was involved on designing the interiors of this building. The building exterior was designed by another architect, Simon Stokes Architects].

EP01: I actually still think, and I don't think I'm being biased, but I still think this is one of the best buildings in the area. It's not pulling too many tricks, the scale is nice.

CM: *[Pausing at steps leading up to the front door of See Apartments] We are in a flood plain here, which is why it's raised, just this end of the street.*

EP01: I like this. You've got the washed concrete...again, people can appropriate. *[looking up to balcony projecting over footpath]* You've got that tree up there, which I like... the staining of the concrete. Not that I'm biased!

CM: *[Indicating construction sites opposite at 42-48 and 36-38 Claremont St] Those are 2 building sites here.. by Plus Architecture. And...down at 30-32 another one by Rothe Lowman.. I'm not sure how it's going to work...Rothe Lowman have an interesting way of dealing with the flood plain, with a ramped laneway up the side of the building to get access, instead of coming in with steps off the front.*

EP01: What's going to happen at street level?

CM: *They've got a sunken bar, with fixed glass – a bit like a fishbowl – and you look down into the bar from the street.*

EP01: Wow... that sounds great, I think that could be good. Again, with the additional injection of more residents into the area, hopefully that critical mass will help it.

EP01: *[Looking through the construction sites to the Melbourne High hockey pitch beyond].* Again that is great, that open space. And even that low rise development *[in Chapel St]* that happened ages ago, do you have any idea what's happening with that. Has anyone bought that to re-develop?

CM: *There are a lot of owners in there so it would be a hard one to acquire. [Indicating towards 34 Claremont St] Whereas this little one here, this little 3 storey...*

EP01: Yeah... what's that, is it a house?

CM: *I think its 6 2-storey townhouses sitting on top of a carpark*

EP01: It looks like a little cut-off on the corner... for a Rescode cut-off... that kills me! You've got to make it a 'thing' ...if you're subjected to it. Otherwise it just looks apologetic!

CM: *[Pausing outside 35-41 Claremont St] That's the site office for the construction site across the road.*

EP01: Which they are probably going to demolish eventually.

CM: *Yes, they have a permit.*

EP01: *[Indicating services at base of 33 Claremont St]* Again, this is not great... but again, what do you do, what's the alternative?

EP01: *[Looking across the street to the side driveway of the townhouses at 34 Claremont St to the hockey pitch behind]* I kind of like this... its private... you can actually see through. Sight lines are pretty important.

CM: *yes - the rest are kind of cheek to jowl.*

EP01: Exactly.

CM: *[indicating to 24 Claremont St] So that's the one remaining light-industrial use.*

EP01: What is it?

CM: *I think its seals used in construction.*

EP01: *[Looking across the Yarra One construction site at 22 Claremont St to the high rise buildings beyond]* That just looks like a city really...

CM: *[Laughs] Does it look like our city?*

EP01: No... but I don't really know what cities look like any more, I feel like! And I imagine during the week... the activity of the cranes probably adds life. *[indicating the site hoarding]* And those little holes... which I imagine are probably for work safety but are they for pedestrians as well?

CM: *Would you like to go and have a look? [Cross to east side of Claremont St to look through viewing 'windows' in construction site hoarding].*

EP01: You know... that's like a performance in a way. I love this... this is the city. So, I guess that goes to show that activity...even though this is like a means to an end to finish a building, I think it's the act of construction, the fact that activity is taking place activates the area... for lack of a better word, and that mediates the crap and the ramps and the services [looking across at 25 Claremont St].

CM: So, the atmosphere for you at the moment is very much linked to that temporary construction?

EP01: Yes it is... though without that what's going to happen? It's a bit of a worry... but I guess when you compare that to the Docklands, the Docklands were separated from the city because of the railway station and the stadium – which they're now infilling – and it was so open, and so wind swept... those interfaces were awful, the restaurants that were closing.

EP01: And with this, it's the grain of the sites that might help it. As you say, cheek to jowl, but then having break out spaces and light and sight lines are also really important. You think about New York, those pocket parks in different areas – break out space that helps.

CM: There's no public seating in this whole precinct- if you buy your lunch...nowhere to sit to eat your lunch. People sit on the steps or wherever...

EP01: Right... I guess this is not the kind of place you would want to dwell in, it's like a place on the way to somewhere else. I guess for me, that is what in a way doesn't make it urban because it's transitional. There's no loitering.

CM: [laughs] No loitering or lingering.

EP01: Exactly!

Sensory walk-along

Saturday 11 May 2019 12pm – 12.50pm [duration 50 minutes]

Weather conditions: cool, 14.5 degrees, sunny, cold wind

EXPERT PARTICIPANT EP02

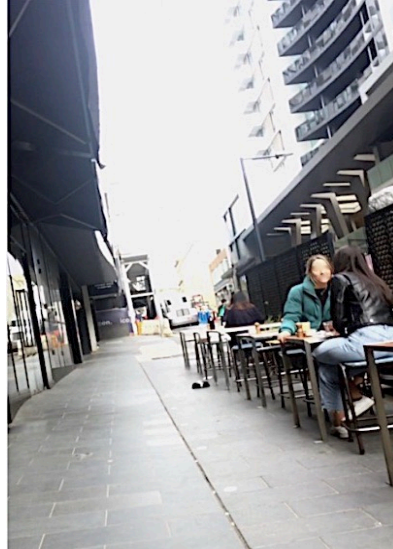
Female. Architect. Age group: 25-30

First generation Australian, Chinese ancestry.



01.

'I like the way they've done the bench seating along the window [...] but usually you're on a busy street and there's the people watching aspect but here you see nothing...'



02.

'It seems like there's great cafes around here... but there's the noise! I can't imagine it would be nice coming here on a Saturday for brunch and sitting outside'.



03.

'I'm really curious about this bamboo... what is it meant to be for. You're not supposed to walk through it but why is it broken up? It really does just feel like a motorbike parking spot'.



04.

'Is this a showroom, a display room? No, an apartment lobby. 'You think they would put something here because you are not really looking out onto anything'.



05.

'Oh, it's the carpark! I thought there'd be some exciting little shop or something. Nope... it's just a carpark.



06.

'That's interesting the way they deal with the services ... low with a window over. Quite clever'.

Still images from the EP02 sensory walk-along video

Daly Street (heading west)

EP02: The main thing I notice about this street is that there's a lot of hard surfaces... it's a strange pocket... there's sort of 'warehouse' type offices and then you've got... is that a Dolce and Gabbana... just there? [indicating to 2 Daly St].

CM: it's Le Louvre... it's a really famous old shop that used to be at the top end of Collins St, I think from the 1960s... then it moved here... it's the most expensive clothing in Melbourne.

EP02: There you go... I haven't even heard of it. But it's definitely what draws your eye on the street ... it looks like a Las Vegas chapel in the middle of nowhere.

EP02: Then you've got the Asian Mart [indicating 6 Daly St] ... always very under-cooked in terms of fit-outs ...not utilitarian but just fit for purpose, there's no dressing to it. It's interesting because I wonder who goes there... it sort of seems like ... but obviously there's a need for it in this area but ...

CM: there's two of them actually... there's another one just around the corner.

EP02: Oh... there you go, who would have thought...

CM: it's a changing demographic.

EP02: Yeah... Dily Daly [6c Daly St].. I didn't know about this place either. The food looks really good.

CM: when it first opened, it was a Scandinavian café, but it changed...

EP02: **[Image 01]** Oh. I like the way they've done the bench seating along the window which I feel like is a café fit-out 'trick' now, but usually you're on a busy street like Chapel St and there's people watching aspect but here you see nothing...

CM: you see the carpark opposite!

EP02: Yeah...not sure they thought about that when they were doing the fit-out... or they just thought, well we'll put bench seats along here... great idea!

EP02: I did drive down this street earlier and then wasn't sure what you are supposed to do about it... its sort of a funny little round-about ...

CM: [looking at Yarra One construction site at 6-22 Claremont St] Fender Katsilidis have designed the large development that's going here...

EP02: OK. I feel like there's a lot happening in this area!

EP02: Bollards... I assume these are so cars can't drive down, not little seats or urban furniture?'

CM: I've seen people sitting on them, they're kind of the right height.

EP02: Yes, they are the right height. I imagine workers sit here on their smoko!

CM: yes they do. [Looking back at 6-8 Daly St]. This one was designed by Ellenberg Fraser. And this was another Ellenberg Fraser [indicating 21 Daly St]

EP02: [Indicating towards upper levels of 6 – 8 Daly St]. Not sure about this guy... I like...it's nice how it's got the built-in planting, but its facing the wrong way [south].

Yarra Lane (East)

CM: [indicating 21 Daly St] When this first opened George Colombaris had a restaurant here.

EP02: Oh... this is Zumbo.

CM: Yes, Zumbo had this tenancy as a High Tea shop. But it closed.

EP02: It went into liquidation? I never realised where Zumbo's was.

EP02: It definitely feels like this is a transition area ... I can imagine that once all the construction is finished you're going to have a lot of ground floor retail activity in the way it's designed with the little pedestrian walkways cutting through everywhere... there's a lot of opportunity for it to be retail with a lot of hustle and bustle but right now it's just that awkward stage in between where either people have moved out... because it's not working for them. Or I imagine rents are quite cheap or else how do you get a giant Asian supermarket in the area?

CM: [indicating to 16-22] This building's going to have a big public atrium at ground floor.

EP02: Oh, ok... is it going to be one of those luxury apartment buildings?

CM: I think fairly upmarket.

Claremont Street (heading South)

EP02: [Looking at the public art] Oh... that's an interesting piece of sculpture.

CM: yes the developer, Fridcorp, provided the sculpture as an urban art contribution.

EP02: Oh... do you know anything about the artist or what it's supposed to be?

CM: something to do with urban trees.

EP02: It looks like lollipops or icecreams to me!

EP02: It smells good around here.

CM: *yes, this is Two Birds... it's quite a good café.*

EP02: **[Image 02]** Oh yes... I've been here before. Is this the same owner as Three Bags Full? It seems like there's great cafes around here... but there's the noise! I can't imagine it would be nice coming here on a Saturday for brunch and sitting outside.

EP02: [Looking back down the street to the side wall of the tower at 33 Claremont St] And what's with the colourful dots. Do you know anything about that?

CM: *just a bit of a folly I think!*

EP02: [Looking across at street frontage tenancy at 3-9 Claremont St] And is this bubble tea?

CM: *yes, it's about the third tenancy that's been in there in the past couple of years.*

EP02: Oh, I don't understand bubble tea.

CM: *actually, what is it?*

EP02: It's like tapioca. It's just gelatinous balls and you chew on them. And get really sweet tea.

EP02: Lots of construction even on a Saturday here!

CM: *[indicating 10 Claremont St] That one was done by Hayball.*

EP02: [Indicating construction site building against boundary of 10 Claremont St] What's going to happen to all those windows?

CM: *Exactly!*

Claremont Street (heading North)

[Indicating Asian supermarket at 3-9 Claremont St] There must be like a bit student population around here or something?

CM: *Yes... I think so. There are some small apartments and we are close to the station.*

EP02: Yes...and aren't there some serviced apartments?

CM: *yes... that's an apartment hotel. There are 4 hotels in total in this area.*

EP02: [Walking past the Bubble tea shop] Wow... what was it before... it's tiny.

CM: *yes, its tiny. I think it was a vegan lunch box thing before... [indicating side wall of tenancy] It's only that deep.*

EP02: Wow...I feel like it's only designed to be suitable for pop-ups.

CM: *[indicating vacant looking shopfront at 7B Claremont St, with office chairs pushed against window]. That one's always been empty.*

EP02: Oh, that's a shame. Not really sure what it is. It almost looks like it's a lobby... leftover space... not really sure what you would ever use that for... it's got lift access. Feel like they should just fit it out nicely so it doesn't look... crap... onto the street.

EP02: Mmm.. smells like fried... fish and chips or something...interesting, can't really see any cafes nearby...

EP02: [Indicating yellow textured fiberglass garage door to carpark at 11 Claremont St] Oh, what is that?

CM: *that's the garage door.*

EP02: [indicating to the garage door] Oh, is that an urban art contribution?

CM: *it could be. It keeps going, through the glass into the entry lobby.*

EP02: Oh, I see. Is there a criteria for what can be urban art?

CM: *I'm not sure, but I think it varies... you do see some terrible examples. But for example in Port Phillip for example it can be part of the building, like the design of the balustrade. It doesn't have to be a stand- alone sculpture.*

EP02: But does Council assess what is urban art? Some of them should be denied!

CM: *[indicating vacant shop front at 11 Claremont St]. This one has been a pop-up... it was a Diesel clothing pop up at one stage.*

EP02: It really is just constant noise here! I wonder what it's like being a resident?

EP02: [Looking through window of 11 Yarra St to model of Yarra One development]. Oh, what's this shiny thing with the timber slats?

CM: *that's what's going up across the street at Yarra One. That timber slat section is the atrium that I think is going to be partially open to the sky.*

EP02: Ok. And it's apartments?

CM: *yes apartments, with cafes on the ground floor.*

EP02: Sure. Do you know when this area might be finished, in terms of everything that's going on?

CM: well, there are 4 construction sites and then about another 3 more sites with permits, which leaves only 4 more sites I think to develop. So perhaps 5 more years?

EP02: Oh, it will be interesting to see what it will be like then!

Yarra Lane (West)

CM: so, this is a continuation of Yarra Ln, even though they don't line up.

EP02: [Looking at Steer Dining Room, corner Claremont St and Yarra Ln] Some kind of steak house?

CM: yes, it used to be in the base of the Olsen Hotel and moved here about 4 years ago.

EP02: Ok. I don't think I've ever walked up this way.

CM: yes, it's kind of tucked away, isn't it...and on the weekend there's not much open.

EP02: Yes, it's almost like the city...Monday to Friday that's when its busy and lively, and now that it's the weekend...

CM: yes, it is very like that.

EP02: It's interesting, because when I think of South Yarra I probably don't really think of this area. I think of south of Toorak Rd ...through to about Malvern. Is this what they call the Forrest Hill precinct?

CM: yes, not to be confused with the other Forest Hill!

EP02: Yes. Oh... a Kwik Copy, OK. So, would all these places be open during the week?

CM: [indicating the Gallery] well that one is, and sometimes its open on Saturdays too... it looks like it closes at 12. That one's a pop-up, next to the locksmith.. it's just gone in. Some kind of beauty bar.

EP02: Oh yeah...

CM: and across there are two real estate agents.

EP02: Business must be booming for you! [Looking at the wheel chair lift] I'm working on a project and we might have to put one of these things in. It's big isn't it?

CM: yes, it looks complicated. It's a shame they couldn't have extended the ramp...

EP02: But that would have gone past all the retail. I wonder if you can even use it? Like if someone came up...

CM: it's got lots of instructions.

EP02: Yeah... but if you're in a wheelchair you're not even going to be able to get close enough to even read that sign.

CM: [Indicting tenancy next to beauty bar] That's new, like in the past couple of days... the Barber's Shop.

EP02:It doesn't look like they've really moved in beyond the sign...

CM: there's a chair, and opening hours... it's says it's supposed to be open.

EP02: It almost looks like an art installation... the way its set up it reminds me of a performance art piece. What's the woman's name who did the thing in New York... Maria, Marina... where you sit down and look at her, it feels like that kind of performance thing.

CM: well they've got their sandwich board out and it says they're open... but nothing. That one over there was a barber...

EP02: Seems like lots of people wanting to put barber's shops around here!

CM: ...and that one was a great little vegan café, it closed a couple of weeks ago. And these ones near the Yarra Ln entry... when it first opened was a well known café, Outpost. And next to it was Mopho.. another 'come to' place.

EP02: Now it's Gozleme – always reminds me of music festivals where the gozleme stand was open 24 hours!

EP02: Oh... Einstein's. That's friends of ours... they owned Einstein's in Caulfield or somewhere, and then they opened this one as Einstein's Relative. Then they sold it and they have another place... Boosa, in Bentleigh.

Yarra Street (heading south)

CM: so, we're in Yarra St now.

EP02: Oh yes... it smells like meat pies and cigarettes. Strange...people still smoking...I've noticed lots of people around where I work are vaping... on Spencer St.

[Note: Camera flipped around for a section of Yarra St, but the audio kept working].

EP02: [Walking past Lulu White's] This is one of those places that does the bottomless brunch. You get a lot of party groups.

EP02: [Looking at entry to 3 Yarra St] Those trees look a bit fake... like a plastic garden.

CM: [indicating to 2 Yarra St] this is an Engineer's office.

EP02: Oh, ok... its very clean, they mustn't do a lot of work!

EP02: [Walking past middle window to 2 Yarra St with blind down] Maybe the mess is all back there! [Looking in kitchenette window] Its quite strange being able to look into their kitchen area!

Yarra Street (heading north)

EP02: So, are they putting another entry to the station at this end?

CM: *yes, that's what is shown on Council's structure plan for the area, but I'm not sure how... there doesn't seem to be much room.*

EP02: No... how would you get to the tracks, would you go under or over... or would it just be access to track 6.

EP02: **[Image 03]** I'm really curious about this bamboo...what is it actually meant to be for. You're not supposed to walk through it... but why is it broken up? It really does just feel like a motorbike parking spot.

EP02: [Looking at bike chained to post outside 10 Yarra St with Stonnington abandoned bike notice attached to it] Oh, why... it seems to be in perfectly good condition. It's not missing wheels or anything.

CM:*[Indicating 10 Yarra St] This is the pre-polling place for the election.*

How to vote card hand-out people: Are you voting today?

EP02: No. I like that on that side is the 'vote for me posters' and on this side is the 'don't vote for these people'. [Pointing at signage to SXY apartments at 12 Yarra St]. Every time I walk past this I think this says 'sexy', but it's obviously South Yarra.

CM: *[Walking past office frontage at 12 Yarra St]. So all the new buildings had to sit back an extra 2m to create a wider footpath. This building is one of the few remaining older ones.*

EP02: [Pausing at office window at 12 Yarra St, with blind down] I like how this leaf is poking out, like it's trying to escape. That must mean there's plants in behind there and they're just completely blocking off its light!

EP02: [Walking past empty planters in frontage of 14 Yarra St]. It feels like when they did build this there was meant to be a bit of greenery or some sort of dressing along here, but they've just given up now...

CM: *[walking past 17 Yarra St]. And this one has a permit or a new building, so this little 1960s building will go.*

EP02: [Indicating towards tenancy sign, 17 Yarra St] D+ C design [laughs] wonder what they do!

CM: *[indicating to 18 Yarra St] This is another Michael Yates/Bird de la Couer apartment building.*

EP02: Ok. [Looking in window of entry to 18 Yarra St] **[Image 04]** Is this a showroom, a display room?

CM: *not, it's just the building lobby with a lounge waiting area... not sure why you would sit there.*

EP02: No... again you think they would put something here (indicating towards the front of the full height glass) because you are not really looking out onto anything. It makes me think of that new Gurner development... with shared wine cellars, and cinemas...but if you had that much money to spend on apartment, surely you wouldn't want to share those facilities? I find the whole thing fascinating.

CM: *[passing 19 Yarra St] this 3 story building... I'm guessing 1970s, 1980s?... will never been any taller because the developer Michael Yates has bought the air rights above it to protect the views from his development behind.*

EP02: [Looking through street-level porthole 'windows' of 19 Yarra St] **[Image 05]** What's down here?... oh, it's the carpark! I thought there'd be some exciting little shop or something. Nope... it's just a carpark.

Claremont Street north

EP02: [Looking at exposed side wall of 47 Claremont St on rear boundary of vacant site at 55 Claremont St]

Oh... what's this? So, you think this is their public art contribution?

CM: *Well, they have to have a pattern on a blind side wall, but it will get built out. There's a permit for this site. It's been re-designed and a couple of permits issued.*

[Indicating pile of mattresses outside vacant lot at 55 Claremont St and abandoned armchairs outside 51 Claremont St] There's always rubbish here.

EP02: It's just people in these buildings?

CM: *No, this is Hickory's site office for the development around the corner*

Claremont Street (heading south)

EP02: [Indicating mosaic tile wall to 50-54 Claremont St] Oh this is quite cute! Interesting... it feels like an older building...

CM: *Yes, I think it was an older building that they renovated and then next to it. This is all offices... physiotherapists... and the building next door is apartments.*

EP02: [Indicating 50 -54 Claremont St] Interesting how the newer building comes over it.

CM: *yes, that's another Michael Yates/Bird de la Couer building.*

EP02: I never realised they did large projects.

EP02: [Looking at services with planter over at 50 – 54 Claremont St] **[Image 06]** That's interesting the way they deal with the services ... low with a window over. Quite clever.

CM: *[Looking up at dead plants in planter above services cupboards, 47 Claremont St] Whereas, look at this one!*

EP02: Oh goodness.. I wonder if it's because it hasn't been maintained, or they haven't picked the right plants.

CM: *Two years ago it had leaves.*

EP02: Maybe they forgot to irrigate it.

CM: *[indicating 45 Claremont St] This is the project where we did the interiors with Kerrie, and Simon – who was Icon's in house architect at the time - did the building.*

EP02: *[Indicating trees on first floor balcony] That's doing really well... are they magnolias?*

CM: Yes.

EP02: *[Indicating window to room on first floor] Is that level...that's not residential?*

CM: *It's a shared lounge for the residents, with a fireplace.*

EP02: Do people use it?

CM: *I don't know... maybe if they're waiting for someone?*

EP02: I like the entry.

CM: *There's a floodplain through this end of the street, which is one reason its raised, but it didn't have to be that high... I think it might have something to do with the carparking.*

EP02: So how do disabled people get in?

CM: *They can't... it was built before the rules changed requiring accessible access for apartments.*

EP02: Oh...that's crazy. Oh, that's got the services... gas meter it looks like. That's a nice concealment.

CM: *[indicating across street]. There's two buildings going onto that construction site... I think the blue hoarding's Bates Smart and the blue one's Plus.*

EP02: It's interesting how a lot don't have the architects advertised them ... it actually takes a while to find out-who's doing it.

EP02: *[Looking up at wooden structure each side of upper level of 33 Claremont St] I wonder what they're doing up there?*

CM: *I don't know... it's on both sides.*

EP02: Maybe it's to do with replacing flammable cladding.

CM: Yes, *could be!* *[Indicating 28-30 Claremont St] This site has a permit for a building by Rothe Lowman.*

EP02: Wow... pretty skinny building!

CM: yes, *a tall skinny hotel, with a glass façade on the street where you can look down into a basement bar.*

EP02: Interesting.

CM: *[outside construction site at 16-22 Yarra St] So we're nearly finished. How would you sum up the atmosphere of precinct at street level?*

EP02: I would say right now it's very minimal atmosphere, but you can see what it's going to become, and that's quite interesting. You can see the infrastructure already there at the moment for this to become a more vibrant place. It is considering what's happening at street level, and not just having luxury residences up 'in the sky'. Right now, it does feel like what's been built is struggling to live up to its full potential... but I feel like it's going to become a really interesting area. And then... it makes me think, what's going to happen to the places that don't have that ground floor activation, like some of the funny little left-over pockets. Like that little room up there (7B Claremont St] will that become anything, once there's more people? I don't know, I feel like it's a real transition area.

[Workmen tell us to move away from the construction area to the other side of the street].

EP02: They're telling us to cross over... ok.

EP02: It must be hard living here right now. *[Indicating key safes on façade of 25].* Wow look at all the lockboxes.

CM: Yes, *air bnb.*

EP02: Oh ok!

CM: *Well that's the end!*

EP02: Great... that was really interesting!

Sensory walk-along
Wednesday 15 May 2019 11.00am – 12pm [duration: 60 minutes]
Weather conditions: cool, 14.5 degrees, sunny periods, cold breeze

EXPERT PARTICIPANT EP03

Male. Planner/Urban designer. Age group: 65-70 years.
Born England, Anglo-Australian.



01.
'...where all those crossovers are you're constantly getting almost subliminal messages to 'be careful'[...] and here..another carpark entry'.



02.
'This is residential apartments? It looks like a display suite really...'



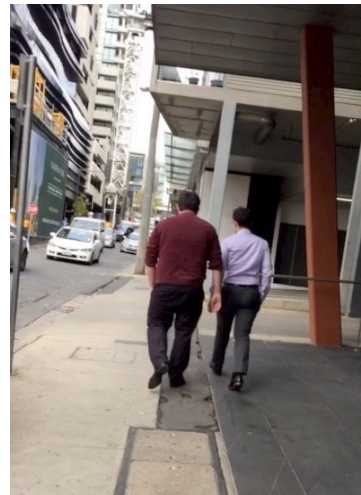
03.
'I think these... you sort of get why these are here but...'it's sort of like, oh yes we have to have them'...a bit like the old SEC substations where they just used to put them in a big box'.



04.
The stairs... there's not a big tread...they're very mean!



05.
'..this is boring [...] pavement's narrowed again... doesn't feel generous does it? It's a space you want to walk through to get to your destination, you don't want to stop here.



06.
'Why are you walking through this precinct? You're young and going to school, or you're doing business, or you're living here... or temporarily living here. But there's very little about the street experience... in Claremont St...too many crossovers, pavement's far too narrow... not enough activation.

Still images from EP03 sensory walk-along video

Note: The first part of video recording was faulty but the audio recording worked for the entire walk-along.

Daly Street (heading west)

CM: have you been here recently?

EP03: No I haven't been here lately... but I've had a long term involvement in the area in it's different iterations, starting with the Como building over the other side that really began the process of re-generation.

EP03: [Walking past 6-8 Daly St] So, we're walking past... on the opposite side to Royal Oak Floors, and what I personally like about this space is the paving... it feels wide, with some patterning... it's just not municipal concrete. The dilemma of course is that it's just for the front of this property, and then it changes again for the crossovers and you think it contributes to the sense of discontinuity. But then, you look on the other side and the same aggregate and the landscape...

CM: I think Council did the Daly Street improvements a couple of years ago so they may have done all the paving too.

EP03: Yes, so it helps give cohesion... the architecture is diverse, and if you're in an environment when there's a lot going on there's something pleasant about a sense of cohesion that makes you feel calmer when you're walking through something that's still basically a construction site. That will change, obviously, but I think this is quite pleasant. It's quite nice the way you are invited to walk across. I like the drainage details that work to maintain the same RL as the pavement... the road pavement and the pedestrian pavement are all working essentially at the same level, it makes it feel like it's one continuous space...which is good.

CM: This site at the end is the Fender Katsilidis designed development, Yarra One, so that's going to change this area.

EP03: Yes.. and the walkway will continue through here as part of that development?

Yarra Lane (East)

CM: They're going to build a wide atrium along the side of it that will increase the width of this access.

EP03: Right. Well I think to me this link has always been important... although we're just going down what is a temporary link, it just enables you to get off Chapel St and find your way in from another position. In some sense it's unfortunate that as you go further down, towards Melbourne High School, they haven't managed to achieve that...but something's better than nothing.

EP03: The paving's good... given that it's probably going to change...

CM: [indicating vacant tenancy, 21 Daly St] This was Zumbo that closed at Christmas time.

I'm assuming that once this laneway opens up through here, these spaces will become activated again.

Claremont Street (heading South)

EP03: [Indicating tables outside Two Birds Café] If you compare the way this part of this street is working with a lot of European streets, when they put a lot of tables and chairs out on the pavement they create an intimacy by defining a space... these tables and chairs don't do that, you just feel like you're punters at the pub... happy hour when the pots are discounted, and if you drink enough of them you'll eat one of their chicken parmas to follow.

CM: [laughs] It's actually quite a good café, but you're right, the outside ambience is quite different from inside and they've recently adding those screens, so they're trying to 'tweak it'.

EP03: There's no back, and no sense of enclosure... which given the camber of the pavement here... this is the flatter surface where they can put their tables... but in some respects, it would probably be better to have the tables up against the windows so you can sit with your back to the window, or your table to the window, looking out onto the street with the table in front of you in that Parisian manner.

CM: But we're not allowed to do that here, are we? There's that regulation that you have to keep this clearway right along the building frontage... I think for the visually impaired... and move your tables to the other side, so that's really impacting on what you can do.

EP03: Is that right? I didn't realise there was a regulation around that, because you see the same thing in Smith St and other streets, and Brunswick St.

CM: Yes, you're not supposed to put anything there... like advertising boards or whatever.

EP03: Yes, well I always find it odd... at least there's some distance between where the vehicles are and that screen, but you're sort of sitting in the middle of no-man's land, aren't you? For me, it doesn't invite me to stay. It's a bit like the organisation of a room... architects know how to organise a room...

CM: Yes, but in other parts of this precinct they have been allowed to put tables on the other side so it's not very consistent.

EP03: [Looking across to west side of Claremont St] So I think the other thing too... when we look at what we might call the podium level of these buildings...even though the podiums are striving to be a similar height to one another, the individual expressions of architectural choice...they just compete with one another. In a regulatory sense it's hard to get an architectural response that has some cohesion about it, still gives individual creative freedom and doesn't end up with this 'mish mash' that I think...because although you're aware of the taller elements but it's the first 3 levels that you're reading... you know, doesn't do much for me! [indicating 3-7 Claremont St]. I hope it's not your work? [laughs].

CM: No, its Bird de la Coeur. We cross over here...

EP03: [Indicating recessed entry to 3-7 Claremont St] So this is, I think, it's inviting us in, there's a sense of punctuation here... there's an arcade or laneway that runs through here.

CM: Actually that's just the entry to the Manor House building... offices and apartment building... so there's no link through here until you get right up to the laneway.

EP03: I think the pavements quite good... probably not quite wide enough...and, well, out the front of this building is quite good.

CM: Yes here they only have a 2m footpath, but other places within the precinct they've been made to set the new buildings back 2m... so it's a bit hit and miss.

Claremont Street (heading north)

[footpath closed for crane lift, short wait before allowed to walk on]

CM: So there are 4 construction sites currently in this street. And that nearly finishes off the development in this street... but there are at least 2 permits, and 2 sites that just seem to be waiting.

EP03: [Outside 3-7 Claremont St] So they've got a supermarket here which is a new use...

CM: Yes, there are two Asian supermarkets... there was another one in Daly St where we started...and then one here, so they're quite close together. I guess that's the changing demographic in the area. This had been vacant since the building was finished so it was good to see a tenant in there.

EP03: Yes.

[Allowed to walk on].

CM: [walking past the small retail tenancy in the forecourt of 3-7 Claremont St] And this little one has had 3 or 4 tenants since I've been coming here.

EP03: So it just turns over...

CM: Maybe bubble tea is what people want here, so that might last...

EP03: [Walking past carpark entries to 3-7 and 9 Claremont St] Yeah...part of the dilemma really with these small streets is that there is a lane that runs from the north side that runs behind some of these buildings, but only for a short distance ... all these crossings for carparks, again just disrupted the streetscape...

CM: but I think they got it wrong because all of these buildings that have rear access... have a rear carpark access... but then they have a second carpark access from Claremont St, so they shouldn't have been allowed to have street access.

EP03: No. I don't know why that's so...but it is disruptive. It's disruptive to the way you walk but also to what's happening on the edge... I know we are walking through it when the whole precinct is very much a construction site.

EP03: [Indicating to 3D render on hoarding to Yarra One development at 16-223 Claremont St]. That Nonda's timber pergola structure reminds me of what he did at the Republic site.

CM: Exactly. [Indicating the render of the atrium] I think this is going to be really interesting. I'm interested in the level changes... its got a huge, like an arena of seating going up to the entry, I'm not sure what that's all about. And the building is following the fashion of curved building façades.

EP03: Oh yes, so it is.

Yarra Lane (West)

EP03: So it's an important link...and what are we, 11.30 in the morning...it's a bit 'calm' [laughs].

CM: Yes... there are two peak hours...morning, school kids off the train...

EP03: So it changes during the day?

CM: It changes a bit...weekends its quiet, everything's closed...

EP03: Oh, is it? that's a shame... they're not really spaces that are creating a lot of activity, are they? Massage, fitness, real estate ... so it gives strength to the observation that getting activation from coffee shops and restaurants is a hard task. Especially when you're the back lane...

CM: Yes, we're off the main strip here.

EP03: [Indicating woman lifting pram down steps, passerby offers help]

CM: Poor person with a pram.

EP03: Yeah... [looks at DDA lifting platform]

CM: I've never seen anyone use that.

EP03: No. You would have thought you could have ramped that on one side... and staircase on the other. Perhaps they can fix it in the next iteration!

CM: The good thing... the lane is 24 hour access, it's not gated. And I think the developer didn't have to do that... so I think that's a positive. And it's partly open to the sky, which I like.

EP03: Yes.

CM: These tenancies constantly change... these two popped up in the last week. I don't know... it's supposed to be open but there's never anybody in there, in the barber.

EP03: At the moment, my observations are that even in Smith St in Collingwood and Fitzroy..., which have always been pretty healthy, I mean they've gone up and down as far as their popularity is concerned ... but the turnover, in the occupancy, every day I walk along that street there's something that has become vacant and is being fitted for something else.

CM: *But they don't seem to stay vacant for very long, do they? Whereas here they seem to stay vacant for a year or two.*

EP03: No, that's true. That's too long.

CM: *I think that's the main problem. Short term vacancy and turnover is just part of the cycle...*

EP03: It would be interesting to know what the foot traffic is.

CM: *Well it's fairly high... I've done pedestrian counts at morning peak hours, lunchtimes and Saturday mornings. And when it's matching the train arrivals it can be 300 people in 10 minutes so it's pretty high...*

EP03: Really?... yes, that is high...

Yarra Street (walking south)

EP03: [Outside 7 Yarra St] So here we are at Punt Hill Apartments... and this is really, just again the awkwardness of getting people off the street in their motor vehicles, blighting the façade, booster system, and then [indicating return driveway] the exit. So, it's contribution to this part of the street is about minus 10.

CM: *[laughs] Failed!*

EP03: Then we've got another crossover for the entry and it's sort of... and I know you're interested in activation... but this was a fundamental part of the skeleton that would have made Forrest Hill work if the Council had had the foresight just to work out the circulation system. And I can remember from my days at working at [company name] the landscape architect saying 'you must work out the circulation first and then work out the other stuff around it. And [indicating 3 crossovers] it's a powerful lesson I think... because we've got 50m, 40m? of not... very good.

CM: *Yes, pretty much the whole façade. [Walking past House of Lulu White, 3 Yarra St] This is where they've been allowed to put the tables on the other side...*

EP03: To me this is a much more comfortable arrangement.

CM: *On Saturday this is really pumping... partly because they offer a bottomless brunch on a Saturday and Sunday morning where you can drink as much as you like! They put the umbrellas up.*

EP03: If you've got a street where this is working on both sides... it just feels, if you want to walk... cross the street to the other side, you don't have to deal with all those barriers. Or squeeze between people who are trying to eat their souvlaki or whatever. So, for the visually impaired they might need to change the pathway. I mean, I find all.. this is just my preference... these benches... why wouldn't you just have 2 chairs against the window, in the Paris model with a table facing in...

CM: *Yes, and it allows people to arrange the furniture the way they want to, whereas this is much more regulated.*

EP03: Yes. But any way, I think that's an improvement over what we saw earlier. And then we come up here and I think also these buildings, because they slightly cantilever and provide a verandah to the street, [indicating 3 Yarra St] just reinforces that you just don't notice... it wouldn't matter if the tower was 3 storeys or 30 storeys in some respects, you just wouldn't notice from here.

CM: *[outside 3 Yarra St] This shopfront is an engineer's office.*

EP03: Yes... boring! But nice wide footpath though. Pretty good paving.

Yarra Street (heading north)

EP03: This to me... this part of the street... the width, 4-metres, this starts to feel like... when you walk down a lot of the streets in New York the pavements are really wide ... not all of them, but a lot of them are... and you just get a sense that everything is happening here, but I'm not in a third world city, where the pavement doesn't work, it's too tight and I'm looking down... I can actually enjoy the planting [walking past entry to 3 Yarra St] and the people coming towards me, and the shopfronts. Whereas over the other side [referring to Claremont St] where all those crossovers are you're constantly getting almost subliminal messages to 'be careful'.

CM: *[looking in window of House of Lulu White] I've just noticed the crowd in there now, it's the 'ladies who lunch'.. it's the opposite of the weekend crowd!*

EP03: [Laughs] I know!

EP03: [Walking back past car entries to 7 Yarra St, with cars entering] You can hear what we've just walked past.. we've got the same footpath width, but no-one lunching here! But it must have been one of the first buildings here.

CM: *It was.*

EP03: [Walking past entry to Yarra Lane]. It's all a bit dark isn't it... might have been better if they took the black out. Looks a bit foreboding.

CM: *Up here is pre-polling so we'll get harassed by pre-pollers. [Walking past 9 Yarra St] Behind this glass wall are the lifts... it's just a dummy shopfront.*

EP03: Oh... so it's really just a glass wall?

CM: *Yes.*

EP03: [Walking past people handing out how to vote cards] Not voting... thanks! **[Image 01]** So here we have another carpark entry.

EP03: [Indicating carpark entry to SXY, 12 Yarra St] Speaks for itself! We've got the same thing there.

CM: *And I think there is also a laneway entry behind.*

EP03: I think that ...I may be wrong... that it may have been who had access over that laneway easement. I remember doing a case round the other side where they didn't have access.

CM: *That makes sense why then...that explains a lot. But there are still Claremont St properties that have carpark entry from both the street and the laneway?*

EP03: I think it was because the traffic engineers said there's only so much traffic capacity in that lane, so you need to distribute some of the traffic off the street, and some of it off the laneway. Which is another reason for getting those bones right.

CM: *[walking past 12 Yarra St] And here's another office right on the street with furniture against the window...*

EP03: Yes, I did a case yesterday where we are having a supermarket on the ground level... and I did one a few years ago when I said how great it is that they have the windows on the ground level, and when I went back after they'd occupied it and they'd just put all these posters across the front. So, I said you had better put a condition on the thing to say no more than 50% so you can see...

CM: *[walking past 14-18 Yarra St] So this is where we lose the wide footpath obviously because this is still an old rag trade building ... there's not many of them left. This is one of the few that I don't think has a permit yet.*

EP03: Yes, with redevelopment of this building that will presumably change. It interesting how quickly the sense of occupation and activity suddenly dies away... this building appears to be empty, doesn't it, or pretty close to it.

CM: *[walking past 17 Yarra St] This one has a permit. [walking past 18 Yarra St] and this is another Michael Yates, Bird de la Couer project].*

EP03: *[Indicating carpark entry at 18 Yarra St] It's the same dilemma, isn't it? [Image 02] This is residential apartments? [Looking in front window].*

CM: *They're all doing the lobbies with fireplaces and fake libraries now... can't say I have ever seen anyone sitting in there.*

EP03: It looks like a display suite really... doesn't look like my library!

EP03: *[Walking past 19 Yarra St] And this is the building where Michael Yates controls the air rights so it will never be redeveloped, but I think it's in multiple ownership anyway.*

Claremont Street North

CM: *So this is a north facing street but not much taking advantage...*

EP03: No, and it seems to me that there's this big oval for Melbourne High School, it's a bit green open space that really needs a large injection of money to re-make the entry gates, and the way in which... if the entry gates...if all the kids that come down from the rail station could enter from the corner, or *[indicating mid-block]* from here.

CM: *Then they'd have to have more staff checking uniforms in the morning... they have someone at the gates and you see some boys putting on their ties around the corner!*

EP03: Oh do they... aren't those days over!

CM: *[indicating vacant site at 55 Claremont St]' This is another Michael Yates site... its been re-designed twice, with a couple of permits, but I think he's holding it, I think.*

EP03: Right. Well... this really speaks for itself, but it would be helpful if there was some contribution to Melbourne High Schools interface here, clean it up a bit.

CM: *Yes, and it would be great to have access through too, but there's no public access allowed through the school... see the sign*

Claremont Street (heading south)

EP03: Well here we are back in Claremont. All the lightpoles, all the electricity should be underground... get rid of all the poles. And re-grade the street so it's like Daly St where it drains to the centre, not to the edges.

CM: *And they haven't made them set the new buildings back in Claremont St, like they did in Yarra St, but they could take out some street parking to make the footpath wider.*

EP03: Yes, this could be... if they took some of this out, this could be a really good shared road arrangement where you define where the footpath is and where the road is by paving materials, than you do by having a gutter that confines you to 2 and a bit metres. And if you took those poles out, and they just became ...if you did that with the guttering and the road pavement, some planting could actually go in the road, in much the same way they've done in Yarra St, and it would start just make...because it's not very long is it, what's that distance... 200m max?

CM: *Cold wind, bit of a wind tunnel!*

EP03: I know...needs some heaters in the street! *[laughs]*

CM: *There's no public seating in this precinct at all.*

EP03: Yes, well *[indicating power poles]* if you took these poles out you'd get an opportunity to do that.

EP03: *[Looking up at dead plants above services cupboards at X Claremont St] Hmm...We recently had a hearing where Clare Cousins had designed a building, and all the stuff was in a booster cupboard, and the Council wanted it pushed back down the side street. The side street was very narrow... the MFB [Metropolitan Fire Brigade] said look we don't want it down there because we can't get our appliances in. So, she stripped out the cupboards and exposed the pipes... and it sort of worked, a bit like plumbing in copper when the plumbers used to do it 'artfully'.*

CM: Across the road they've done a different solution...they've kept all the services very low, I'm not sure how they got away with it, and have the planter and window above it. It's obviously well maintained.

EP03: Yes... and I'm high enough to see through the window, but you might be battling!

CM: I can see in... just!

EP03: Well...apart from the noise!...it's just not very pleasant, I think the constant crossovers really just make it difficult. [construction noise too loud to talk for a while]. And in a way, it all the more reason to change the profile of the road, so that it comes out, gently grading it to central drainage... just needs 10 million dollars!

CM: At least.. this end of the street is in a flood overlay, so probably more! [more loud noise]. It's particularly noisy today!

EP03: [walking past 35-39 Claremont St] That will be redeveloped.

CM: Yes, there's a permit.

EP03: [Indicating services cupboards at 33 Claremont St] **[Image 03]** I think these... you sort of get why these are here but... it's sort of like, oh yes we have to have them'...a bit like the old SEC substations where they just used to put them in a big box. [Indicating entry steps at 33 Claremont St] I don't know why... is this because of the flood plain?

CM: not completely ... they probably had to raise the floor level to about 1-meter I think, but not this high... I wonder if it has something to do with the carpark. This building has carpark access from the rear but I wonder if they have done a semi-basement.

EP03: **[Image 04]** The stairs... there's not a big tread...they're very mean!

EP03: [Walking past 25 Claremont St] **[Image 05]**and this is boring....

EP03: Pavement's narrowed again... doesn't feel generous does it? It's a space you want to walk through to get to your destination, you don't want to stop here. If you and I wanted to stop and have a sit down conversation this is not a street you'd want to do it in. You can see the potential in Yarra St...

CM: Even though the train runs along Yarra St?

EP03: The train's sort of momentary though...

CM: So what is the atmosphere of this precinct, from a sensory perspective? Obviously - its audio overload today!

EP03: **[Image 06]** Well I think... why are you walking through this precinct? You're young and going to school, or you're doing business, or you're living here... or temporarily living here. But there's very little about the street experience... in Claremont St...too many crossovers, pavement's far too narrow... not enough activation. Even here [looking along Yarra Ln towards Moose Café] ... if you and I were going to have coffee now... where would we choose to have our coffee...we might go into that space just there because it's sort of inviting you in, but having walked through here, there's very few other spaces up there we would say 'lets go in here'. Rather than sitting in the lane you would rather go and sit in here because it might have a better ambience than the laneway. And the same applies to the street. If you were retrofitting, or trying to 'heal the wounds' that have been created here, the only thing I can think of is the suggestion we made earlier... re-do the road, take those light, SEC poles out, re-work the road and pavement so they're at the same level...

CM: And what about the building frontages themselves?

EP03: Well...the building frontages... if you started to do that, in some of those dead frontages... let's just go back out...[looking north along Claremont St] in some of those dead frontages that were further down there, if you re-worked the road pavement you might be able to actually have some sort of activity in a nearby shop, that is ...say...a coffee shop or café but have patrons that are just a bit further up the street ... if you want to sit here and talk and have a coffee, we'll bring it up to you. In the streets in Barcelona they make the centre of the streets an urban parkway... so it's all paved, there's seating. People sit there, kids play... this is road, the carriage way – effectively one way, a shared pathway... and I say ...see that young lady over there I'm having a coffee with... we'd like 2 lattes, and they bring it over to you. So probably, given that all this investment has taken place and is now locked in, the enhancement now rests in the hand of the public purse. Which is always the way, because municipalities just don't get their developer contribution plans up and running early enough because they are too frightened, and they lose and squander the opportunity.

CM: so we've talked about the fact that at the moment the atmosphere is noisy, and it's dull, especially in Claremont Street.

EP03: And, even if you were a private owner and you put a lot of effort into it, no-one's going to sit there... because it's a bomb site. The street's a construction site... so why would you invest in it. So once these buildings are finished... perhaps in 5 or 10 years. It would be interesting to monitor it!

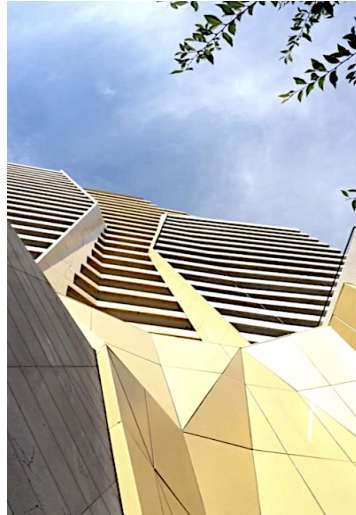
Sensory walk-along
Saturday 16 February 2019 3.10pm – 3.40pm [duration: 30-minutes]
Weather conditions: warm, 26 degrees, sunny, windy

LAYPERSON PARTICIPANT LP01

Female. Media and communications teacher. Age group: 60-65.
First generation Australian, Russian ancestry.



01.
'...it just feels like the buildings are there but there's nothing occupying them, at this level, at the pedestrian level.. except we're coming towards a café where there's life and people. But we've just walked all this way and it just seems dead'.



02.
'Our first hit of colour! And in fact I think this colour works really well because it's warm and it works really well with the greys and the blacks... that looks great, taking it all the way up... I like that.'



03.
'This little café is the first sign of life I've seen in our little walk. I think this really says something, you know, about the amount of apartments etc. and yet, and this is the only place we see people out enjoying themselves'.



04.
'...down here is very dead again. At ground level, with the sun... and nothing happening here, all we're looking at is closed spaces. Here they've put in a big window, with nothing in it'.



05.
'...again, all they've thought about is parking the car. This could be closed off with glass and you could have things happening here'.



06.
'So, they can put these things at the front? [Laughs]... I find that bizarre. This is such a valued space... I don't understand it'.

Still images from LP01 sensory walk-along video

Note: The first part of video recording was faulty but the audio recording worked for the entire walk-along.

Daly Street (heading west)

LP01: Standing here...it doesn't feel like Melbourne to me. I am feeling very hemmed in and closed in by the scale of these blocks... there's a carpark in front and these apartments. All around, the scale – the vertical scale – is slightly intimidating in terms of being a pedestrian. The thing I like... just looking around here... is I am standing near a gum tree. The gum tree is beautiful but very out of place... it just seems like a unique specimen. The apartments are very close... everything is in close proximity, and very built up. Obviously, there is still building going on and it is quite noisy, noisy as a living environment. So... it's only the little bits of greenery that are softening it.

LP01: Even at street level...there's a bit of colour from some of the shops but ... it's on different inclines, the levels are slightly different ... and there is no sort of signage, no wayfinding signage telling us is this a dead end, and where do I go from here... I am really wondering where do we go from here? Is there a way out ... is there a way through?

CM: *We are going down the laneway.*

LP01: But how would we know ... again no signage.

CM: *This construction site here is for Yarra One by Fender Katsalidis, so there is another big building going up in the gap here.*

LP01: [looking around] Looking at all these little balconies, it feels like another city, it doesn't feel like Melbourne to me. It's like being in an Asian city. I don't know... just the scale of it to me, growing up in Melbourne, feels quite foreign...in terms of what I associate with this area.

CM: *This is the start of Yarra Ln and then it continues across Claremont Street.*

Yarra Lane (east)

LP01: Well I quite like this little laneway, but you would have to know it's here...you know, this is sort of a bridge to the next part. Maybe when all this comes down [points to the hoarding]... I don't know...

Claremont Street (heading south)

LP01: I'm just looking here, all around.... It just seems to me that it's a hotchpotch of architectural styles.. what's with these apartments? The scale is massive, just massive. Looks like there's a few properties for lease here?

CM: *[walking past 2 Birds Café, 12 Claremont St] This café is usually quite busy.*

LP01: Yes, that's a good one for brunch. But again.. what do they look out on? [pointing to the mobile planter boxes and screens]. They tried to do something with the screens... I don't know... it looks very cold... no greenery here at all. And, as I said, I just find it very intimidating... you're looking up and you aren't looking at the sky... more apartments.

LP01: [Pointing to hinged metal discs embedded in the asphalt along one side of the street, outside a construction site] So what are these?

CM: *during construction on this site they sometimes close part of the street and put a fence up*

LP01: Oh, the posts go in there. It's a wind tunnel here!

LP01: And so... a small supermarket?

CM: *yes, there are 2 Asian supermarkets in this block.*

Claremont Street (heading north)

LP01: Well, it's certainly new Melbourne, I would never recognise it. You know, coming to South Yarra for years and years and years, its changed so much with the high-rise feel here...and the density factor. In fact, considering these are apartments, there are very few people here at street level, so you know, you would almost think these were offices... that it's the weekend and these are offices, not apartments.

CM: *there is a mix. This building up here [indicating 9 Claremont St] is offices, but you are right. Most of the buildings here are apartments or hotels – there are 4 new hotels.*

LP01: Yes, I noticed some of them said apartment hotels.

CM: *[indicating towards 9 Claremont St] When this first opened, this was Dutton's Classic Cars.*

LP01: All those places have gone? Incredible the change...

CM: *It's now a display suite for the apartment development across the road*

Yarra Lane (west)

LP01: This is where we are going through here?

CM: *Yes, again this is a lane on private land but its open all the time.*

LP01: But again, you wouldn't know that this connects... only by actually coming down here. There's nothing to tell you that it goes through.

LP01: The other thing is, I just think... it's very black, lots of black being used, it's a dark colour throughout. Greys and blacks. So, there's nothing that's lifting that.

LP01: And why wouldn't they have a ramp there? How do you get through with the stairs... 'does the ramp go around?

[CM points towards an open wheelchair lift to the side of the walkway]

LP01: [Laughs].. why couldn't they have just extended the ramp! All they had to do was have that ramp go up there, it's crazy...

LP01: Ok... all of this is just dead, and it's the weekend... and these businesses that could actually deal with all these apartments and people... why is all this closed? I mean you can understand businesses closing say in the CBD when the people are going home to their living environments... if their living environments are these apartments, why are these businesses closed? You've got a captive audience [laughs] I don't understand...

LP01: [indicating to the cafes at the west end of Yarra Lane] This looks interesting... Turkish, Japanese...I mean that's the great thing about Melbourne's diversity that the eating environment caters to so many cultures and groups which is fantastic, we are very fortunate.

LP01: [looking towards west end of Yarra Lane] And this bamboo screenings good... again using vegetation to screen, I think that's great.

Yarra Street (heading south)

LP01: [**Image 01**] So, you've got public transport... you've got the train line nearby...I don't know, it just feels like the buildings are there but there's nothing occupying them, at this level, at the pedestrian level... except we're coming towards a café where there's life and people. But we've just walked all this way and it just seems dead.

LP01: [walking past footpath tables to House of Lulu White Café, 4 Yarra St] So this is great,, everyone's out in the sun. A young crowd, a young people's mecca.

LP01: [Looking up at front façade of 3-4 Yarra St] **Image 02** Ok.. our first hit of colour! And in fact I think this colour works really well because it's warm and it works really well with the greys and the blacks... that looks great, taking it all the way up... I like that. And again, a bit of greenery

LP01: So...is this going through to the shops that will be in there, or is this all apartments?

CM: *This is all apartments*

LP01: Good to see some bike racks... although I think their position could have been more thought out, more considered...[laughs] because they are right in the middle of the pavement. You could have put them to the side. This is weird, right in the middle...

Yarra Street (heading north)

LP01: [walking back past House of Lulu White café] Well, as I said this little café is the first sign of life I've seen in our little walk. I think this really says something, you know, about the amount of apartments etc. and yet, and this is the only place we see people out enjoying themselves. It would be interesting to know if they actually lived in the area or not. Really young crowd, isn't it?

CM: *The population in this block is quite a young demographic*

LP01: Right, so is this sort of first time apartments... do you think?

CM: *Probably*

LP01: OK, first bit of signage I've seen is here, from this side but not from the other side. Even the style of the signage I don't think... there's no continuity between the style of the architecture and the signage. I think the signage looks of a certain time as opposed to...whereas here.. and then you've got this City of Stonnington. There's no continuity in the signage.

LP01: [referring to Einstein's Relative café façade at entry to Yarra Ln] This looks great... I'd like to come here when its open!

LP01: [passing carpark entry to 10 Yarra St] So lots of carparks. So, when they buy an apartment, there's not a carpark attached to it?

CM: *A lot of them do actually have a carpark.*

LP01: Right.. but not enough of them?

CM: *I don't know... I think they actually have more carparks than were needed...*

LP01: Really? [indicating cars parked in street] so how come there's all these cars parked here?

CM: *Oh... these are just short term visitors.*

LP01: [Outside 12 Yarra St] [**Image 04**] Right...see down here is very dead again. At ground level, with the sun... and nothing happening here, all we're looking at is closed spaces. Here they've put in a big window, with nothing in it...

LP01: [Train passing] Ok [laughs] ...so we've got loud train noises as well to contend with! I don't know ... if is a question that this is all new and it's not happening as yet. But it just seems very, very dead.

CM: *[passing 14-16 Yarra St] This is one of the few older buildings remaining, eventually this will go.*

LP01: But see here [referring to empty planters in front of building façade of Yarra St] you could have green plantings in here, there's nothing.

CM: *There's some weeds!*

LP01: Yes... and cigarette butts in the planting areas!

Top end of Claremont Street (west to east)

CM: *What kind of atmosphere do you think the ground floor plane creates?*

LP01: For me, it's certainly ... nothing to engage with... it's all closed off, it's all locked up...there's no human element, and there's nothing to entice you to go into a space to engage with human activity or anything like that...dark greys, fencing, closed off carparks,

rubbish and graffiti, and high rise huge apartments with cars parked everywhere. So it's not really enticing in any way. And yet, if I look across, to a school - and here the famous Melbourne High- and just looking at the greenery and the building and the open space it's a lot more enticing.

CM: looking down service lane running off Claremont St. I don't walk down here much ... it's a bit creepy.

LP01: Well it is... it's creepy in the daytime! I don't know what it would be like at night. I can see they've got one light but everything's closed off... there's no escape, you have to walk the whole length.

CM: and it's a dead end

LP01: And then it's a dead end... and it doesn't tell you.

LP01: And all these bins out on the pavement. I certainly think at ground level there's nothing I've seen so far that allows you to engage with it...it's all just closed off to the street.

Claremont Street (walking south)

LP01: In fact... this part has changed since I've been here because they used to have the Bonds shop... there used to be some retail outlets along here, and there also used to be quite a good Turkish restaurant down here as well. That's all gone.

CM: I used to live in this street in a 1930s-apartment building when there was still the yeast factory

LP01: Oh yes!.. and you would smell it!

LP01: [indicating empty site at 42 Claremont St] Well there's a building that's gone down so another.... yeah. It's really interesting to see the demographics of this area's changed so much... and how many thousands of people have moved in or are moving into these apartments?

CM: About 10,000

LP01: 10,000!...I just don't know that... so far there's no sign of any ground level infrastructure to support. None! I can't see anything on the ground level... apart from one café down there, and everything else you have to walk to Toorak Rd. But it's interesting, in this vicinity at the bottom of these apartments there's nothing.

LP01: [Indicting open carpark [35 -41 Claremont St] **[Image 05]** I mean, again, all they've thought about is parking the car.

CM: Well this is one of the old rag trade buildings, and you are right... all they thought about was the cars.

LP01: But this could be closed off with glass and you could have things happening here.

LP01: [Indicating length of services cupboards hard on the street interface at SYX2 apartments, 33 Claremont St] **[Image 06]** So, they can put these things at the front? [Laughs]... I find that bizarre. This is such a valued space... I don't understand it.

CM: Sometimes, [pointing back to 50 Claremont St] see the one down there, they've done them low and put a planter box on top, so that's another way of dealing with it.

LP01: [looking back to 33 Claremont St] But even if... they could have done this lower, and had the balcony... and that could have been a café where you are actually looking out...but to have just that...[indicating steep flight of stairs to front door of SYX2 apartments 33 Claremont] Ok, access... how do they get away with that? And that's steep.

CM: Yes... we are in flood overlay here so they have to set it up, but not that high...

LP01: The steps are short and they're high. How do you gain access to the building if you can't climb the steps? I don't understand that.

CM: [Indicating Amity Apartment Hotel, 27-29 Yarra St] this one on the right is a hotel and office building.

LP01: But here at least they have a lift going up.

CM: Yes, that's a commercial building.

LP01: [Looking around at both sides of street] Here, I find this really ugly... this whole area. I mean... all I can say is maybe it's still developing, but all I can see so far... like these fences across here and the fronts of these buildings, whether it's the stairs or the amenities [meaning services] seem to take up... it's not really thought through... I don't think they are thinking about it or they're not envisaging the pedestrians interacting with the building that much... you know... I find it's really ugly.

LP01: And then looking through here [laughs] I'm just, I'm really daunted by the scale of it all.... it's almost like vertical slums when you actually see people's washing and all the minutia of life hanging out on this tiny balcony. I feel that the atmosphere for me is that they're caged because of all these buildings on top of each other. As I said, it's a very big city now.. it's no longer the old Melbourne. This area's changed so much.

LP01: [Towards frontage of 25 Claremont St] I mean...letterboxes straight on the street [laughs]. That's just asking for vandalism! So much small detail they haven't really considered, I don't think. And none of this appears to be finished [indicating damaged footpath].

LP01: Constant noise... what's this fan for?

CM: It's for the carpark.

LP01: They're loud!

CM: back to where we started. Thankyou!

Sensory walk-along
Friday 29 March 2019 10.45am – 11.15am [duration: 37 minutes]
Weather conditions: warm, 24.5 degrees, overcast, windy

LAYPERSON PARTICIPANT LP02

Male. Firefighter. Age group: 55-60.
Anglo-Australian.



01.
'It's just a jumble of high-rise isn't it? They all seem to have just grown, without any sort of cohesion, and they're still growing at the moment'.



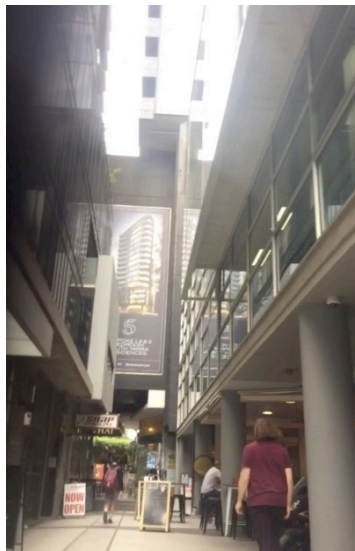
02.
'That's interesting that bit of chrome there, that they've tacked on to the underside of that building [...] The lights look nice set into it. [...] it's in need of maintenance, these lights here are broken. Without lighting it would be very dark in here, especially at night'.



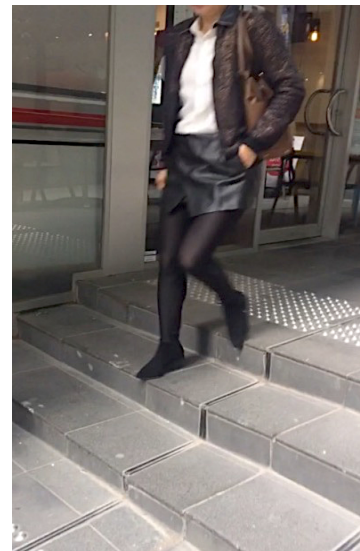
03.
That's interesting, that building with the stucco sort of effect that they've got on the walls, again just to soften the look of the building a bit'.



04.
'I wonder what this stuff's made of.. [Knocks on sculpture]. Metal... yeah, well, beauty's in the eye of the beholder there, I think. Looks like marshmallows on top of each other with a couple of popsicles!'

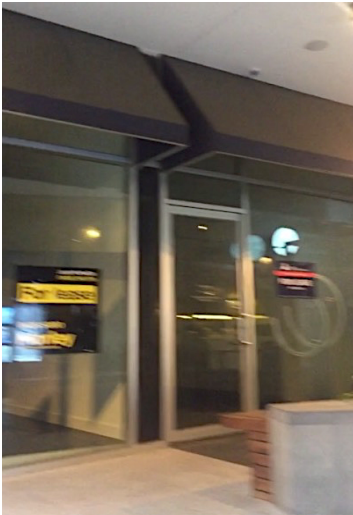


05.
'It's a nice little arcade. I would think it would be a bit of a wind tunnel at times with the right direction, a wind like a southwesterly or something like that, it would be quite windy in here'.

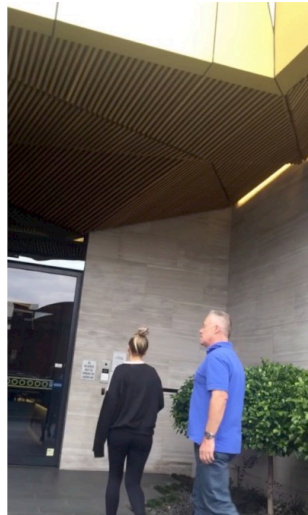


06.
'..bit of a problem there with the levels [...] It's all over the place, isn't it? narrow down there, high there... Some cracking there [...] that's raised a bit there, so it's a bit of a trip hazard for some people'.

Still images from LP02 sensory walk-along video



07.
'Mixed-use shops... some of them, ... a couple of them are empty at the moment so you worry about the viability'.



08.
'That entrance is quite good [...]...although it's dark in there [indicating to entry lobby], it's bright out here at the moment, mainly cos of the yellow and the reflection down off that. It's a nice open space... looks well maintained, which is good'.



09.
'The old station... the old brickwork and the pointing still as good as the day they laid them. They used a good mix, and obviously the people who did construct it knew what they were doing... they were well practiced in the art of laying bricks. It looks excellent'.



10.
'People dining al fresco, nice to see dining outside, it's a nice place to have some food... but you've still got the cars going past. [Indicating street trees planted between street carpark]. They've attempted to create a buffer between that and the station but when cars come down here they're usually a bit loud. So that breaks it up a little bit'.



11.
'So, having a carpark down here obviously deadens the area... there's no cafes or anything like that so it just becomes, sort of, light-industrial. Yeah... it's a hell of a lot quieter here compared to the café. If you look back up there to where the café... there's people up there, even walking past, people using that area as a thoroughfare. But down here you just get people passing by, they're not stopping. It's just a walk through'.



12.
'Well the atmosphere of the precinct on *this* [Claremont] side, is pretty ordinary because of the noise...it's a lot better when you go through and end up in Yarra St. It buffers the noise from the construction [...]. [The train noise] comes and goes... the construction noise is just constant, with the banging and the clappers and everything like that... the yelling and the whistling of the dogmen with the cranes.

Still images from LP02 sensory walk-along video

Daly Street (heading west)

LP02: So here we are, starting off from the gum tree. See a fence down there, it's made of bamboo, it's got a gate... next to the old building. The gate looks a bit out of kilter with the old building... but it was probably cheap.

LP02: [Indicating towards the street level columns to 6 Daly St] This building, I wonder if that's flammable cladding there, that stuff? It could well be... [Knocks on column] No, it's hollow so there's no cladding within it, it's steel only.

LP02: A big carpark there...a multi-level carpark which I haven't noticed before. Is this a dead-end street?

CM: Yes – for cars, not pedestrians.

LP02: Pedestrians can keep walking through...

LP02: [Turning towards Asian supermarket at 6 Daly St] Your usual run-of-the-mill Asian grocery store... what's above this, is it all residential? How many storeys is it?

CM: Yes apartments, it's about 12-storeys

LP02: It's about 12-storeys... yeah...again there might be issues with cladding up there, possibly..

LP02: [Looking to footpath dining to Dily Daly cafe 6 Daly St] A bit of an al fresco area outside...the seats look alright. I haven't seen those seats before...they look quite different. **[Image 01]** And it's just a jumble of high-rise there isn't it? They all seem to have just grown, without any sort of cohesion, and they're still growing at the moment.

CM: There's a big building going to fill in that gap.

LP02: Yeah, Gate 3 ...for Ecoworld International. And that's going to be residential more than likely, by the look of it?

CM: Yes

LP02: Will it have shops underneath it...do you know?

CM: Yes, well... a restaurant and café

LP02: Right... [indicating towards canopy above Yarra Ln] that's interesting that bit of chrome there, that they've tacked on to the underside of that building.

LP02: [Looking towards high-rise under construction corner Chapel and Toorak] Another big building going up there...it looks residential as well. What's that one called?

CM: The Capitol

LP02: The Capitol... yeah, its got an interesting shape to it.. very curvy, wants to be a little bit different. Bit stark next to the one with all the straight lines. When's the completion date on that, do you know?

CM: Its getting close... maybe 6 months.

LP02: Six months... need to get a move on!

CM: Oh, maybe a bit longer, maybe a year.

LP02: Looks like it's going to take a bit longer than 6 months! Where to now?

CM: We're going to go down through Yarra Ln..

LP02: Watch out for the cars in this turn-around point... it's probably not a bad idea. [Looking back towards the upper level balconies to 4-10 Daly St]. And here you see...a lot of greenery coming out onto the..., to soften the building a bit, and you can see it needs a little bit of maintenance because its growing below where they've expected it to have grown...going through all the cracks, sending runners down looking for water. Yeah... I dunno, I don't think I'd like to live in one of those buildings.

Yarra Lane (east)

LP02: So, what's this called, this one?

CM: Yarra Lane

LP02: Yarra Lane... [looking up to soffit] **[Image 02]** again, you can see the chrome underneath parts to the building. The lights look nice set into it, rather than having them outside... again it's in need of maintenance, these lights here are broken. Without lighting it would be very dark in here, especially at night.

Claremont Street (heading south)

LP02: [Looking across road to 9-11 Claremont St] **[Image 03]** That's interesting, that building with the stucco sort of effect that they've got on the walls, again just to soften the look of the building a bit. And they're growing some olive trees up there as well, and looks like citrus up the top.

LP02: [Looking towards third floor of 15 Claremont St] That interesting too, that studio... do you think that's a studio on top, or is it an apartment?

CM: I think that might be an office, I think that's an office building...

LP02: Right, it's in the Macmillan Building. Yarra Ln.. I haven't been down here since it's all been built...

LP02: [Looking at street artwork outside Lilli, 12-14 Claremont St] Bit of sculpture...

CM: Did you ever come down here before all this building work happened?

LP02: Oh yeah... when the Capitol Bakery was here, prior to what was it?... a Fun Factory of some sort, prior to... and that died, through lack of interest.

LP02: [Walking towards sculpture] **[Image 04]** I wonder what this stuff's made of. [Knocks on sculpture]. Metal... yeah, well, the beauty's in the eye of the beholder there, I think. Looks like marshmallows on top of each other with a couple of popsicles!

LP02: [Indicating the metal discs in the footpath] And all the trading.. footpath trading.... what are they called, those things?.

CM: Footpath trading boundaries, I think...

LP02: Boundaries, yeah... which is very important because before that, everyone used to run their own race. You go down to Lygon St and you've got to dodge all the outside café al fresco dining areas.

LP02: Big crane there... hope that it doesn't drop anything while you're around.

LP02: [Indicating double height canopy outside Manor, 3-7 Claremont St] That's an interesting building isn't it, with all the façade they've built. Haven't seen anything like that before.

CM: Do you think it gives much protection?

LP02: Yeah.. well, it gives protection for people walking underneath... ah... yeah, interesting building.

CM: We're going to turn around and walk back down to Yarra Lane again.

Claremont Street (heading north)

LP02: Where does that go... through to River Street?

CM: Through to Yarra Street.

LP02: Yarra Street.. yes street over the other side isn't it. Look, little doggie... a lot of people would have dogs in their apartments. We had a fire at a block of flats, and they told us there was a dog inside. I thought, well it can't be that big. When we got in there the dog was very frantic due to the smoke - and it was a bit German Shephard, living in the flat! So, you just never know what you're going to run into.

LP02: The school's down the end here, isn't it?

CM: Yes, Melbourne High.

LP02: Are we turning left here?

CM: Yes. So you haven't been through here before?

Yarra Lane (west)

LP02: No, I haven't been through here before. **[Image 05]** It's a nice little arcade. I would think it would be a bit of a wind tunnel at times with the right direction, a wind like a southwesterly or something like that, it would be quite windy in here. It's not windy in here at the moment.

LP02: [Looking up] And again, you get the stucco effect up there on the side of those panels... Would that be architecturally designed?

CM: Yes. It's a texture on the face of the concrete panels.

LP02: Yeah.. when they cast it. Or do they put that on post-casting?

CM: No, they cast it that way.

LP02: Yeah... it's quite interesting. I suppose they just have to make sure all the bits go in the right place when they construct it. [Looking at Red Moose Café] They've got some outdoor heaters which... they've done the right thing here with reticulated gas instead of LPG because LPG is always problematic with the storage and handling of it. But that's something that when I was working at the DG [Dangerous Goods] Department I did a policy paper on LPG and patio heaters. I went into Lygon St and found some of the patio heaters had market umbrellas above them and you could see the scorch marks... they were actually getting burnt. The City of Yarra asked us for a policy position on that because it was giving them problems as well, so I did a paper recommending reticulated gas instead of LPG, for safety.

LP02: [Indicating upper level building crossover] What's goes through there, is that just crossovers...where you have the solid building?

CM: It's where the 2 pieces of the building join together... I think it is hotel on one side and apartments and offices, a bit of a mix.

LP02: Ok.. and underneath you have the shops and everything like that...so I think it would be handy for the people.

LP02: [Indicating the steps] **[Image 06]** They've had a bit of a problem there with the levels by the look of it. It's all over the place, isn't it? narrow down there, high there...and it looks like they've already had problems with that step, they've had to re-do it... and that looks relatively secure now. Some cracking there. Their expansion joints haven't worked properly... that's raised a bit there, so it's a bit of a trip hazard for some people. But it's also wheelchair friendly I notice, it's got a ramp as well as steps... but around here we've got a lift so a wheelchair can traverse across from that area to this area here across and then down the ramp. So it's wheel chair friendly which is not something that's always taken into account so that's good, for the wheelchair people.

LP02: **[Image 07]** Mixed-use shops... some of them ... a couple of them are empty at the moment so you worry about the viability.

CM: I think these ones may have always been empty actually?

LP02: Yes, that one says Display Open, so it must have been a display suite. Yeah... people trying to eke out an existence. [Looking in Real Estate Agents window] That might well be the person who manages the property.

LP02: [Looks up at the ceiling] A little bit of a feature... don't know if it's meant to light up, it's not lit up at the moment. Bit of a chandelier... and that's the only one they've done there... just that one chandelier. I don't think it's much of a feature, do you?

CM: *I haven't noticed it before!*

LP02: You haven't noticed it before?

CM: *Referring to Einstein's Relative café on corner) that was a good café and it's just closed!*

LP02: Yeah well a lot of the stuff up this lane is food orientated. You wonder how much of a business they eke out of it really. There's so much of it, and it's so cheap [pointing to menu outside Greedy Cat Kitchen] Fried drumstick \$1!

LP02: And the bamboo...well it just looks odd to see bamboo here. It goes with the Asian restaurants.. but I don't know if they would have that in mind when they designed it.. there'll be Asian restaurants so we'll put bamboo here. Maybe they thought of that.. dunno. Just a bit odd that you, all of a sudden, find 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 clumps of bamboo. It's a bit like that gate back here... it's a bit out of place.

Yarra Street (heading south)

LP02: Standard poodle... that's about standard around here, all the stray dogs around here are pedigrees. They don't allow any 'bitzers'.

CM: *Ha ha!*

LP02: [Looking at services cupboards outside Punt Hill Apartments, 7 Yarra St] Sprinkler boosters.. don't know whether the signage in there would be correct .. a lot of the time the signage is not correct, in accordance with the standard.

CM: Do you think its ok that the service cupboards are right on the street?

LP02: Yes.. it's a lot better for them for maintenance, there's regulations. They've got to have a hard-stand area in front of hydrants, I think it's a good idea to have them recessed, and – of course – maintained.

CM: *It's just that they take up quite a lot of the frontage when they are right on the street, it could be better if they are rotated at 90 degrees into an entry. The MFB won't allow it.*

LP02: Well I don't know how that goes, you could always apply, I think, for a variation. It's something that maybe they need to look at, the [Fire] Brigade to see if the variation is reasonable.

LP02: [At recessed entry to apartments 3 Yarra St] **[Image 08]** That entrance is quite good. Big door.

CM: *What do you like about it?*

LP02: [Looking up at the canopy] It gives you protection. It's a nice...although it's dark in there [indicating to entry lobby], it's bright out here at the moment, mainly cos of the yellow and the reflection down off that. It's a nice open space... looks well maintained, which is good. Everything looks quite nice... the architecture all fits in quite nicely, the way it's been designed. It looks quite good.

LP02: [Looking up at the upper level façade of 3 Yarra St] Quite an interesting shape up there isn't it? The way it comes in and then goes out again. And I notice that up there they have what appears to be drenchers... but they may not be, they may be points for accessing the outside of the building. Anchor points. That may be what they are, it's a bit hard to tell from this distance but I think they are anchor points.

LP02: [Indicating brick wall of South Yarra Station running down west hand side of Yarra St] **[Image 09]** The old station... the old brickwork and the pointing still as good as the day they laid them. They used a good mix, and obviously the people who did construct it knew what they were doing... they were well practiced in the art of laying bricks. It looks excellent.

Yarra Street (heading north)

LP02: [Walking past House of Lulu café at 4 Yarra St]. People dining al fresco, **[Image 10]** nice to see dining outside, it's a nice place to have some food... but you've still got the cars going past. [Indicating street trees planted between street carparks]. They've attempted to create a buffer between that and the station but when cars come down here they're usually a bit loud. So that breaks it up a little bit.

LP02: [Walking past carpark entries to 3 Yarra St and 7 Yarra St] Then here there is no al fresco dining, so it's just confined to that portion we just looked at.

LP02: [Indicating person on scooter exiting from carpark to 7 Yarra St] One of those crazy people on scooters... they were just talking about that... these scooter people. They're all on death wish I reckon, especially in the city they're crazy. They think it's Singapore... they can do what they like and just go around.

LP02: [Looking up at signage on column at the entry to Yarra Ln] That's interesting... what's those numbers? Is that the number of the street?

CM: *Yes... that building is number 7 and that one is number 9. It's a bit cryptic.*

LP02: Ok, it is very cryptic. Actually, the 7 you can pick up... the 9 is a little bit harder...

CM: *Actually – that side is 7, and that side is 9.*

LP02: They've got it arse-about have they? Well, someone got paid a lot of money to design those silly things!

LP02: [Looking up at upper level windows and balustrades to building crossing above laneway] That's something I've noticed straight away is how dirty those windows are... they aren't getting maintained, and, also they're getting a bit of paint moving off the under portion due to rain. It will be interesting to see how that looks in 10 -years' time... even up there you can see more paint coming off there.

LP02: [walking past carpark entry to 9 Yarra St] **[Image 11]** So, having a carpark down here obviously deadens the area... there's no cafes or anything like that so it just becomes, sort of, light-industrial. Yeah... it's a hell of a lot quieter here compared to the café. If you look back up there to where the café... there's people up there, even walking past, people using that area as a thoroughfare. But down here you just get people passing by, they're not stopping. It's just a walk through.

LP02: [Walking past 10 Yarra St and looking up at canopy] That gives you overhead protection from rain, although when it's from the southwest it will be blowing in. It will be tomorrow and Saturday... it won't be a nice place to be.

LP02: [Stopping at signage outside 12 Yarra St] SXY – what's that all about?

CM: *South Cross Yarra? Not sure...*

LP02: I don't know what that means. SXY. It's just all light industrial, office space?

LP02: [Looking down, outside 14-16 Yarra St] And I see that now we have gotten away from the main buildings, the footpath is starting to deteriorate. Is that a gym? Yes, it's a lot quieter down here

Video recording was interrupted for approximately 3-4 minutes. Items discussed during this period:

- Timber soffit to curved canopy to Yarra House, 18 Yarra St – LP02 liked the shape and the timber lining.
- Porthole windows into the carpark of 19 Yarra St. LP02 went up to the portholes to look through and asked 'why would you want to look into a carpark?... I suppose it's for ventilation'.

Top end of Claremont St (west to east)

- Pile of mattresses and piles of clothing dumped outside the vacant block/carpark – the way in which rubbish attract rubbish, and how Council should do something about it.
- Melbourne High cricket ground across the road and LP02 has memories of playing cricket there against the MHS team

Claremont St (walking south)

[Note: Video re-started shortly after re-entering Claremont St.]

LP02: [indicating 55 Claremont St] **[Image 13]** The timber on that façade looks quite good.

CM: *Why do you like it?*

LP02: I guess it looks natural.

LP02: [indicating towards 47 Claremont St] Another thing I've noticed.. looking at the underside of this building here... they've put some ferns in... ferns haven't done too well. It looks pretty ordinary... I think they've got to neck them, take them out and put something else in. They probably died for lack of water more than anything.

LP02: [Footpath closed outside construction site at 38-42 Claremont St] We'll have to cross over.. construction... constant noise. And I would say a lot of dust at times emanates out... and the concrete trucks, screaming up and down, day after day.

LP02: [pointing up onto roof of 2-storey warehouse at 35-41 Claremont St] Someone's ironing board up there... I wonder if that came out a building up there [indicating towards 45 Claremont St]...looks like it, they just decided they don't want it anymore. [laughs] Could be useful... might come back and get that, they've obviously just abandoned it!

LP02: *[2 traffic management girls sitting on a low wall outside 35 Claremont St said Hi, how're you going?]*
Good ... how are you? *[good..]*

LP02: [Crossed back across to east side of street; indicating towards upper facade of SXY2 apartments 33 Claremont St] Oh... its got little bubbles on the side.

LP02: [Looking up at top level of 33 Claremont St] They've got that platform on the side of the building made out of ply...so we've got one of those on each side of the building. Why? It's got holes in the floor so I don't think it's a walking platform... not sure. And they've got all those red and blue balls hanging off the building... spheres... semi-spheres...The entrance is nice, again they've got a lot of clutter on the balconies which makes it all look a little bit untidy.

LP02: [turns towards Amity apartment hotel, 29 Claremont St] And this one here.. you can tell its apartments, all the furniture's the same...

CM: *Yes it's an apartment hotel*

LP02: Yeah... yeah... so you can hire them by the night.

LP02: [indicating towards old warehouse at 35 Claremont St] It won't be long before that goes and [towards 34 Claremont St] and there's an odd little block of flats there, that's only 2 stories. Its dwarfed by everything else around it, so again that's probably not long for this world. Although it looks very well maintained by comparison to a lot of the buildings around here... [looking down south side of the building] that's quite a nice little area. [looking towards open field beyond] That grassed area there... I presume that probably belongs to the school?

CM: *yes, it's the hockey pitch.*

LP02: Ok... so the schools obviously hemmed in as well, and limited as to where that can grow to. So if they can't grow out they'll have to go up. As they say they're not making any more land, unless its New Zealand and they have a quake.

LP02: Yeah... walking up towards the construction zone where they've got these cranes working, all the construction work.. the noise picks up again. And I don't know how these people in these buildings, in the offices... I presume it's like living next to a train track, you just get used to the noise and you don't notice it any more, except when it gets intolerable.

LP02: [Indicating thin pad of concrete laid over street carpark space outside construction site at Yarra One 22 Claremont St]. That's interesting, they've laid a membrane under that which makes you wonder if they're going to pick this up and remove it ... so with the membrane underneath they can remove this slab of concrete quite easily, with a jack-hammer... I think that's probably why they've done it. [footpath is closed, crosses back to west side of street again].

LP02: [Indicating motorbike sitting on footpath outside 25 Claremont St] Again, motorbikes seem to just park anywhere they want to.. that's a Triumph... a Fruxton?... I've never heard of a Fruxton...

LP02: [Looking back towards the construction site at Yarra One, 22 Claremont St] Again, just constant noise, with the construction going on. Big deep holes... have you had a look at the big deep hole?

LP02: [Crosses back across to east side of Claremont St to hoarding outside construction site, with clear perspex viewing 'windows'. Looks through window into site] They're preparing to lay another slab by the look of it. Look at that guy walking across the reo...that's got to be a little bit 'how's your father' as far as health and safety goes... pretty easy to trip over.

LP02: [Looking back across the street to 6-storey office building at 15 Claremont St] That's a nice building over there. Macmillans. Eventually I suppose like the others these will disappear and you'll have more highrise residential.

CM: *We're going to finish up here, but going back to the atmosphere of the precinct?*

LP02: [**Image 12**] Well the atmosphere of the precinct on this side, is pretty ordinary because of the noise...it's a lot better when you go through and end up in Yarra St. It buffers the noise from the construction.

CM: *But you get train noise over there?*

LP02: Yeah but it comes and goes... the construction noise is just constant, with the banging and the clappers and everything like that... the yelling and the whistling of the dogmen with the cranes.

CM: *All done, thankyou!*

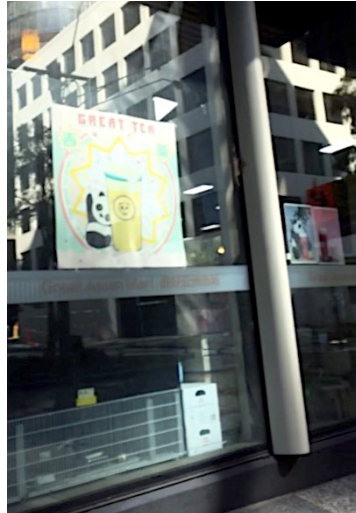
Sensory walk-along
 Friday 12 April 2019 1.15pm – 2.15pm [duration: 60-minutes]
 Weather conditions: warm, 24.5 – 25 degrees, sunny, light wind

LAYPERSON PARTICIPANT LP03

Female. Art consultant. Age group: 60-65.
 First generation Australian, Italian ancestry.



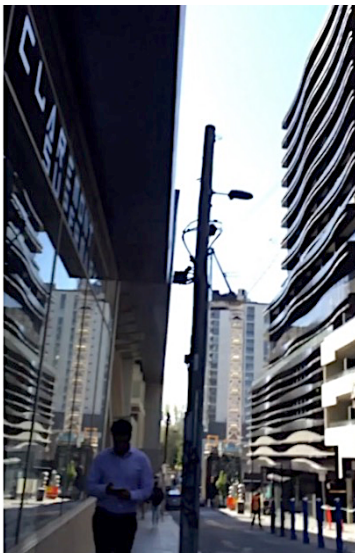
01.
 'The first thing that strikes me is the noise from the services, [...] it would be great if they could get a sound barrier on that somehow and shoot the sound upwards [...] it's just really offensive, the sound..'



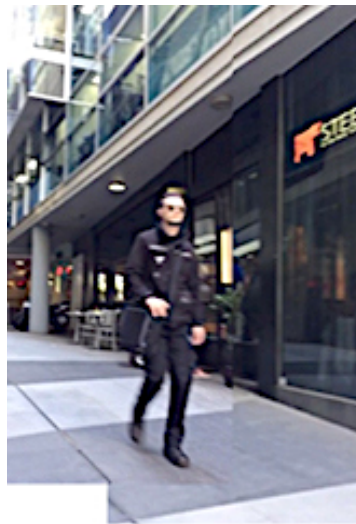
02.
 'Sadly some of the few traders who are here are not very good at house-keeping. The dirty windows get me straight away so I think they need to hire a cleaner just to clean it up.'



03.
 'I find these sculptures really disgusting [...] first of all they're grey [...] do we need more grey in this particular landscape? [...] Something more colourful and less... we've got so much bulk in the buildings... a tree would have been better..'



04.
 'I just felt a big gust of wind. When you've got a combination of wind and not so much light... what is it now... its 25 to 2, and there's not going to be any more sun on this side of the street. So, [...] you've got an am side and a pm side'.



05.
 '...despite the lack of light its feeling better here [...] I see tables and chairs and that instantly felt better [...] But [...] dark curtains doesn't help the streetscape because again, its closing off.. it would be nice to see diners... life, beyond the concrete..'



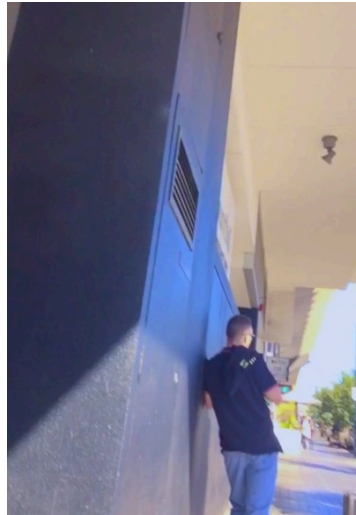
06.
 '...as much as we need locksmiths and things I don't find them very nice businesses to have at eye level [...] it just becomes a necessities [...] area.. locksmiths, real estate, dry cleaners... one of those pockets where you get all your stuff done, rather than enjoy the space..'

Still images from LP03 sensory walk-along video



07.

'... it's darkish, so it doesn't get much sunlight, and it feels dead, it feels very uninviting, it feels like something you would just walk through. It doesn't help that the shops are closing or closed, and dirty... that kind of thing'.



08.

'...that's disgusting, the smell of cleaning detergent and...that's definitely a toilet smell. There must be ways of pumping that smell and that air up, so that once it gets to the street... oh, it goes on forever doesn't it! There must be a way of deflecting it so that it goes up high, rather than out towards our face'.



09.

'Nice to see some action on the street... nice to see the girls at lunch ... So, this is nice, and it seems obvious... well, maybe the operator is just a good operator that has good food, but it's also a sunny side of a street... so why wouldn't you sit here ... rather than in the dark somewhere..



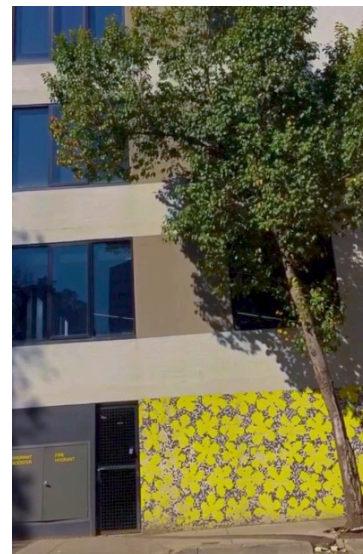
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'...the façade is [...] dull! I mean, really, you could have done a lot of interesting things, like perhaps set the windows in or out, instead of having just a flat surface [...]why have so much window if it's not going to say something'.



11.

'this is yuck... we've got... it's great to have lots of glazing but the minute you start putting desks up against, back end of computers, and filling boxes, and reflex paper and you know, all of that... again, it does nothing for the streetscape'.



12.

'It's actually a nice little building [...] the daisies, a bit twee, but I think the tone of the yellow is a good yellow, a very acid yellow, and I think the building's quite simple...[.] I can see [indicating through the windows to the stair well] inside there you've got the levels painted in the yellow... one, two and three. So, I quite like that. And they've highlighted the fire, the water, fire hydrant thing... so, it's understated but they're still trying to do something a little bit interesting'.

Still images from LP03 sensory walk-along video

Daly Street (heading west)

LP03: [Image 01] The first thing that strikes me is the noise coming from the services, the airconditioning on the left hand side [indicating air register on Daly St facing side wall of 627 Chapel St].. it would be great if they could get a sound barrier on that somehow and shoot the sound upwards rather than... yeah... it's just really offensive, the sound. No wonder everyone is wearing headphones!

LP03: [Indicating the heritage tram substation building 2 Daly St] So Le Louvre here is really lovely.. it's a nice addition to the street. Love the use of a heritage building.

LP03: It does feel like it's just a thoroughfare from one place to another, despite the fact that the Louvre is sitting pretty there... it just feels... like you want to get past this point and get to where you're going. There's... do we want some more cafes in Melbourne with some tables and chairs? There's tons of those but they always seem to enhance the lower level.

LP03: [Pausing outside Asian Supermarket at 6a Daly St] [Image 02] Sadly some of the few traders who are here are not very good at house-keeping. The dirty windows get me straight away so I think they need to hire a cleaner just to clean it up. [Looking up at planters on balcony on first floor above] And the token greenery up there would be really nice if it flourished, and you can't really see much greenery there but it would be nice if it flourished... more greenery! You can't have too much greenery! [laughs].

LP03: [Pausing outside Cryotherapy tenancy at 6b Daly St] Even this is a bit obscure... what are we?

CM: *That's one of those cryo things where they put you in a very cold chamber for 30 seconds*

LP03: Oh, oh my goodness...a new therapy is it? Fantastic! [laughs]. Oh yeah.. I can see their logo there. It would be good to have some information... oh I see there are some cards there you can collect [inside on the counter].

LP03: [Pausing outside Dily Daly at 6c Daly St] Café... yay! Café brings life. It's quite minimal, quite simple... oh yeah, I don't know, I'm just trying to think about what I'd do to change things. Probably put the tables and chairs on the other side [i.e. the window side of the footpath].

CM: *I don't think they are allowed to, they have to keep a clear zone next to the building façade for blind people etc.*

LP03: Oh, OK. So maybe, something as little as some planter boxes that could run from pillar to pillar and that don't protrude beyond the pillars so that they don't create an obstruction for the blind or the handicapped. Just to add a bit more...because I think that's what gets me the most in this street, there's so much concrete... tar and concrete and token greenery [looking at planting on south side of Daly St] .. which will probably grow in time.

LP03: [Moving past apartment entry and vacant shop at 6d Daly St] Yeah... it all just feels a bit... I suppose this is still all to be leased out, so... So, Lucia is... an apartment building?

CM: *Yes there are 2 towers – Lucia and Chiara. This is an Elenberg Fraser design...*

LP03: Right...[looking upwards to the upper level façade] well I like it from this view, it's actually quite.. I like the gentle curves and the ... yeah, good... well as I said, once the greenery takes over a bit more I think that will be nice.

LP03: [looking at Yarra One site] Ok... then we get to here, which is a work in progress right?

CM: *Yes, this is a Fender Katsilidis building going in here.*

LP03: Ok, so this will be like a closed court basically.

CM: *Yes, but there's going to be a public atrium you can walk to, next to the existing narrow laneway.*

LP03: Oh right...so really this street does feel like the back end of everything. Even though it does have a lot of entrances it does feel like the back end. I don't know... are we asking too much from it, does every street have to be beautiful? But there's nice little bits... the attempt here with the curved timber batten wall. It doesn't do a lot to obscure the fact that it's a big ugly carpark, does it really? It's a shame that didn't go underground or something.

CM: *Where the Fender Katsilidis building is going used to be where the Salt Night Club was.*

LP03: Oh yes.. the notorious Salt Night Club! So... Ecoworld International.. that sounds promising! [laughs]. What are they hiding behind the positive name!

Yarra Lane (east)

CM: *[Indicating to the empty tenancy at the entrance to Yarra Ln] That used to be a George Colombaris restaurant, and then Adriano Zumbo ran it.*

LP03: Oh yes...oh this is ugly isn't it! But this will have to be leased out...was it a bakery I expect or a cafeteria?

CM: *Zumbo ran a High Tea restaurant, serving fancy high teas.*

LP03: Oh... the tea thing doesn't really catch on as quickly as bars... we're still all drinking...well I don't know, I mean this is all temporary isn't it.

CM: *Zumbo's closed at Christmas. This is where you could look into the kitchen and see the pastry chefs working, it was quite interesting.*

LP03: But surely.. did the Katsilidis building next door would have changed the nature of its business, would have detracted from this business wouldn't it?

CM: *Possibly, but apparently he was in trouble before that..*

LP03: Yes, well it might have just sped up the inevitable process.[looking through window into what had been the kitchen] Look, you can get an Italian meringue recipe there! There you go, if you want an Italian meringue, there's the quantities. Know that there is a lot of sugar in Italian meringue! [laughs].

LP03: Well it's a very temporary space... but it's going to be a very dark walkway once the building goes up, isn't it? We'll get a little shaft of light here, won't we?

CM: *Yes that's a good point because I think the building next door comes over...*

LP03: So there will be a few hours, a shaft of light...

CM: *[Pointing to marketing perspective on the hoarding] There's a picture here of what it's going to look like...*

LP03: The artist's impression... oh, where do the stairs come from?

CM: *They lead up to an entry*

LP03: Oh.. that's good! So there will be quite a distance between...

CM: *The roof comes over so it's partly closed in.*

LP03: If they've done their light studies. or whatever the technical term is, right then the dappling of the light looks quite nice...

LP03: So alright, it's all a bit grubby down here isn't it!

Claremont Street (heading south)

LP03: **[Image 03]** Well... I've got to say, I find these sculptures really disgusting! But they are really practical... because you can leave your crushed packet of cigarettes here if you want to leave them for next time! And you can also leave things like that... that's what people are thinking about these sculptures! I don't know, personally I find them... first of all they're grey, they're silver but they're grey. And so, do we need more grey in this particular landscape? I don't think so. Something more colourful and less... we've got so much bulk happening in the buildings, there's solid bulk... I think a tree would have been better here than those sculptures, quite frankly! I don't even know ... coming from an art background I should be able to interpret these but they just look like squashed balls. I don't know, there's probably a story but aesthetically they do nothing at all but add to the greyness and bulk. There's like a stagnant energy about them. They don't invite me to hang around. They're not the type of sculptures you know... when you travel the world .. wherever, whatever main cities, you've got sculptures where people take photos in front of them. I wouldn't be asking anyone to take my photo in front of these unless I wanted to post it as a joke or something. I hope I'm not offending a very famous sculptor... I probably was!

CM: *I can't remember the sculptors name but I think they were provided by the developer of this building.*

LP03: As part of the urban art strategy... of course. But it looks like plop sculpture... quite literally...but plop sculpture is what is just put in to fill a space, rather than basing it on a brief.

LP03: And wouldn't trees thrive here because of the amount of light we get here...[points to tree]. One tree... one tree!

LP03: [Turns to planter box screens outside Two Birds Café] Oh you could do better too! A couple of spider plants on a climbing wall! I mean... they're not going to climb! [laughs]. Consult an expert please! But, those sculptures have really got me miffed!

LP03: [Looking at services cupboards in frontage of 12-14 Claremont St] Ok.. I'm just looking at this now with a slightly more critical eye since spotting a beautiful hidden services effect just off Domain Rd... so there's some lovely apartments there that have been so cleverly designed.

CM: *[laughs] Oh, who designed those ones?*

LP03: I think it was Clare McAllister! But the use of the screen that could fold back ...or something, the fire hydrant ,and sprinkler were hidden. Because look at this... that's a whole shopfront. And I'm sure the fireys are happy about this, but its big chunks of space that's not that interesting..

LP03: So, we're starting to get that New York tightness aren't we...the tight street, the high buildings. Mind you that one's not too high...the one with the brownish concrete? [looking to 9 Claremont St].

CM: *That's the 6 storey high podium to the taller towers beyond.*

LP03: So that's nice and considerate... to allow light into the opposite carpark, into the carpark! [laughs][Looking at upper levels of 12-14 Claremont St] But there are apartments up there?

CM: *Yes – podium carpark levels, then apartments. That's another Ellenberg Fraser design.*

LP03: Oh, there you go... typical, the curves...that gentle curve thing

LP03: [Looking at glass box tenancy in forecourt of 3-7 Claremont St] Oh this is terrible... see, why I don't know...oh, ok.. I see they're setting it up..

CM: *They're fitting it out. There have been several tenants in there in the last few years.*

LP03: Well I certainly hope they get rid of all these posters in the front... I hope all these posters are just to tell people what's coming.

CM: *See that Manor name sign... I've seen people getting their photo take there.*

LP03: There you go! So, yeah.. a logo or name gets more attention than the other thing , right!

[Looking back to the glass box café].. that little café in the front doesn't work.. they should almost get rid of it. There is a brutal feeling of failure.

LP03: [Pausing outside Claremont Supermarket at 3-7 Claremont St] And a supermarket... massive!

Claremont Street (heading south)

LP03: [Turning to look back down Claremont St] This street has got some good architecture.. Ellenberg Fraser and Katsilidis...it needs to be ... this is the front of these buildings isn't it?

CM: Yes

LP03: There really should be more trees.. its feeling very industrial.. well, because of the building going on... there's really just no...

CM: *What kind of atmosphere do you think this street has?*

LP03: Umm.. it doesn't feel like home. If I was living here I'd feel like I was living in a commercial area, more than... I remember driving down here for the first time a couple of years ago, the first time in many years, and I was shocked at the number of tall buildings and the congestion. I just remember it being very different... I used to come to a nightclub... way, way back. It just feels hard... a bit harsh.

CM: *I used to live in a little 3 storey apartment building on that site there, for six months when I first came to Melbourne. There were no other residences – there was a yeast factory so we used to get these strong smells of yeast.*

LP03: Oh right. I thought it was the Rosella sauce factory?

CM: *No, it was the Pinnacle Yeast factory and the Tetley Tea factory, so when they got demolished that opened up this big area for development. I lived next to the nightclub – where Salt was, it was called the Warehouse.*

LP03: Oh right... that's the one I went to, it was one you had to line up for, and I only did it once. Yeah... look it's kind of hard to comment 100% on a street that's still in progress. I'd like to see what plans Council have for just enhancing the street-level for pedestrian users. And maybe restricting traffic... it's all one-way at this stage isn't it? I suppose it has to remain a one-way thoroughfare otherwise you can't get into the carparks.

LP03: Yeah... for me it's really, well...[Image 04] I just felt a big gust of wind. When you've got a combination of wind and not so much light... so what is it now... its 25 to 2, and there's not going to be any more sun on this side of the street. So, it's really just... you've got an am side and a pm side I suppose. Ah... its very bustley, there's a lot of movement going on. I suppose its lunchtime so all the workers...[looking back over road to sculpture] I'm sorry I just really... so that will be Ellenberg Fraser's ... ah..choice?

CM: *Possibly, or the developers?*

LP03: [Walking past some commercial wheelie bins on footpath outside 9 Claremont St] So this must be really horrible on bin day! I imagine this street would be lined with bins, on bin day!

Yarra Lane (west)

LP03: [turning into laneway arcade] ...[Image 05] Ok, despite the lack of light... its feeling better just because as soon as I turn the corner I see tables and chairs and that instantly felt better. Then as I stop and look... we've got, oh... that horrible Snap Fitness, 'now open' – all the display signs start getting a bit tacky... lets see we've got a meat place here, dining room [looking towards Steer Dining Room restaurant] which is very dark... again.. the dark curtains... they don't want to be seen eating cows...eating animals! [laughs]. But the fact that they've got dark curtains doesn't help the general streetscape because again, its closing off... its really... it would be nice to see diners... life, beyond the concrete, the pillars and things...

LP03: [Indicating lines in the paving] This is interesting... tracks of some sort... what are they?

CM: *Not sure but could be expansion joints in the slab.*

LP03: Oh... it looks like a little tram track!

CM: *This used to be Dutton's car showroom.*

LP03: Oh right... so now I'm getting a sense of exactly where we are.

CM: *It's now the display for the Fender Katsilidis building.*

LP03: So that's got potential of becoming... once it's not a display suite anymore, of having the potential of becoming something a bit more interesting... shops. [laughs]. More eateries.

LP03: It's pretty dark and gloomy isn't it, it's really... [looking towards motorbikes parked outside Steer Dining Room.. I'm confused now, I'm not sure if it's a walkway or a road with motorbikes parked there? I'd rather see bikes parked there actually rather than motorbikes. Actually, yeah.. there's a real lack of designated bike parking so we're not encouraging cyclists. Unless people keep their bikes in their garages... but if you are just visiting on a bike... I guess you've got to chain it up to this bannister here... a railing... maybe there's no room for bike thingies.

LP03: [Looking at tiling on steps] And this is already starting to lift, isn't it...already a shift of levels happening here.

LP03: Oh.. dark, dark, dark!

CM: *it's interesting.. they've opened it to the sky, which is good...*

LP03: But you'd only get midday sun here wouldn't you?

CM: *yes, true*

LP03: It's a shame. It wouldn't be my choice to eat in this space... with all the other choices in a half kilometer radius. But I tend not to eat in food plazas anyway.

LP03: [looking at Locksmith tenancy] [Image 06] And as much as we need locksmiths and things I just don't find them very nice businesses to have at eye level [laughs]. And real estate... this could become... I feel sorry for the traders that are restaurants and

cafes... it just becomes a necessities, real estate area.. locksmiths, real estate, dry cleaners...like all of those types of things... I guess it just becomes one of those pockets where you get all your stuff done, rather than enjoy the space...

CM: *Services close to a railway station.*

LP03: Exactly...railway station kind of businesses.

[Stopped at Simple Seed to get a takeaway coffee. Discovered it was their last day before closing down. When asked why, staff said it was because the owner has just had a baby and is going to concentrate on the wholesale business. Staff think there are negotiations under way with another food tenant].

LP03: [looking back down laneway] So, I'm standing here at the end of this lane and I'm thinking to myself... it's darkish, **[Image 07]** so it doesn't get much sunlight, and it feels dead, it feels very uninviting, it feels like something you would just walk through. It doesn't help that the shops are closing or closed, and dirty... that kind of thing. But my question is... if I was in a small street even tighter than this in Barcelona or Verona... or even Degraives St Melbourne... what's the difference? It would be just pumping... there would be so much going on...there would be so much life, despite the fact there's not much sunlight at all... there's no sunlight at all. And I think part of the success of those tiny streets in Europe and Degraives St... to name maybe one... the style of the buildings we've got in those European cities and Degraives... we've got really old buildings... we've got this beautiful, friendly, historical sort of design that helps. And here we've just got these very harsh lines, very masculine feel. [Looking upwards] We've got a really bad token chandelier up here that does nothing by day because it's all weak LEDs - it looks as dead as anything, and its pretty pointless at night because I don't think any of the retailers are open at night so it's kind of...Yeah, so I think that's it. It's the style of the architecture... there's a lot of stainless steel, glass and right angles... a few token curves. Its harsh...there's nothing classic... and not that I like neo-classic anything, I do like contemporary architecture...but something a bit more interesting! Think Gaudi! Think Fed Square... think things that are a bit more interesting, it's all a bit blah.

LP03: There's obviously all those elements that make tight dark streets interesting that are missing here...

LP03: And again... I emphasise... there was a guy who was on his bicycle and he went into Simple Seed, and there was nowhere to park his bike so he had to take it in to a tiny, tiny shop.. so it would be nice to see some bikes out here... preferably with baskets with some baguettes and flower in the front! [laughs]. Oh look... here's a bike but they had to chain it to a railing!

LP03: And this is interesting ... food delivery bikes parked in the bamboo! I really find...signage... this is awful. The tackiness! So, I find A frames always a tacky way of doing signage... [looks up] ok... we do have some signage up here, but it's very minimal and it would be nice to actually consolidate. Someone's put stickers up there, so they're trashing the signage. So maybe that means the signage should be higher so it's not reachable [laughs]. So perhaps give everyone signs up there... let's see Top Kitchen up there, that would be nicer and get rid of all these floor signs. There should be an aesthetic 'nazi' walking around here... I'd put my hand up! [laughs].

Yarra Street (heading south)

LP03: [outside 7 Yarra St] **[Image 08]** I can smell ... yuck... toilets, cleaning - combination of toilets...

LP03: And again, we've got all this combined hydrant and sprinkler booster. I think its ok once you enter the carpark, like this... the driveway...but I think when it's on street level it would be really good to have these hidden in some way.

LP03: And think this is quite good having a little bit of parking on this street... in between the trees. Although, although... I don't know. Could you make it non... I don't know. I suppose it's probably a very practical road that has to be driven down.

LP03: [Looking to railway station platform across the road] And I know it's probably heritage, but I think the railway... now that it's getting a bit more populated this street...it could be good to something more with the fence. Whether it's a different colour or add something else... I don't know, it's pretty awful that horrible off-white creamy white heritage colour.

LP03: [Outside House of Lulu White café, 4 Yarra St] **[Image 09]** Nice to see some action on the street... nice to see the girls at lunch having a glass of white wine. So, this is nice, and it seems obvious... well, maybe the operator is just a good operator that has good food, but it's also a sunny side of a street... so why wouldn't you sit here on one of our beautiful autumn days rather than in the dark somewhere. I guess the foods good because there's plenty of people inside too.

LP03: [Entry to 3 Yarra St] Oh yeah... look, personally I find the landscaping... are they real? They actually look like fake trees, this topiary design... it's a little too manicured... overly manicured, and ordered. Be nice to see some... again, we've got... more bulk in these trees... are they, ficus? But, there's so much bulk...I'd like to see a tree planted here that's as tall as the wall... or a creeper, something a bit more free-flowing, a little more open and breezy, rather than these structured little guys. And you're getting the sunshine here so there's plenty of plant life that would thrive.

LP03: [Outside office at 2 Yarra St] Oh yeah... I just think, engineers' offices, probably, you know... ground level places should be tendered, leased out on tender...so that offices need to go upstairs.

CM: *So you don't think offices should go on the ground floor?*

LP03: Well... not if they're not going to do anything really interesting...Look, actually, offices can be on the ground floor. You just have to be selective. I've seen some lovely interior design and architecture offices where they've got their meeting room... like here, on show... and I'm thinking of one in particular, Emma Tulloch Architect on High St in Hawthorn. She's got a beautiful aesthetic... scandi aesthetic in her meeting room with a beautiful white curtain that pulls across, just a sheer curtain that pulls across when the sun descends in the afternoon and it's really nice to see the life in there. But here...oh, I don't know, it's just a bit dull. Well, [laughs] they're engineers!

CM: *Well the façade was done by the building owner...*

LP03: **[Image 10]** Yes, well the façade is bloody dull! I mean, really, you could have done a lot of interesting things, like perhaps set the windows in or out, instead of having just a flat surface. I think the colour of the... I think the white stone is actually quite nice but

you've got... I mean, why have so much window if it's not going to say something. At the moment you've got all of this window... you've got some green chairs here, yay!... but along here we've just got blackness, they've just got the blinds down, because maybe their filing is all messy and they don't want anybody to see. But, it's the wrong business to be on street level if that's how they're going to treat the front of their business. And their logo's a bit 80s... the colour and everything. [laughs] Dulux Stromboli! I used that to paint my outdoor setting back in the 80s! It just doesn't do anything to enhance the street at all.

CM: *Dull atmosphere?*

LP03: Yeah...plain, dark grey... so who was the architect?

CM: *I think Bird de la Couer. [note: this is incorrect; it was actually Rothe Lowman Architects].*

Yarra Street (heading north)

LP03: [Indicating yellow façade above entry to 3 Yarra St] So this is good... I didn't even look up, I like this yellow...so that's quite nice I really like the angles of all of this...that would have been fun to design and create. That's quite good... but the landscaping doesn't feel like Bird de la Couer had anything to do with it.

LP03: And [indicating decrepit planters outside House of Lulu White café] that's kind of sad.. I don't know who that belongs to ... them [entry to 3 Yarra St] or them [café]. Ok.. well then, the right hand side... the engineer's side is quite disappointing.

LP03: [outside 7 Yarra St] **[Image 09]** Ok, so Punt Hill Apartments, we came past here... oh that's shocking... that should never have been allowed, that's disgusting, the smell of cleaning detergent and...that's definitely a toilet smell. There must be ways of pumping that smell and that air up, so that once it gets to the street... oh, it goes on forever doesn't it! There must be a way of deflecting it so that it actually goes up high, rather than out towards our face.

LP03: [Walking past man on mobile phone standing in between rows of bamboo] ... I was wondering what he was doing, I though...hm...

LP03: [Outside closed Einstein's Relative café at entry to Yarra Lane] Well, I hope this opens up... look, clearly there's a lot more to be done here because there are too many unused retail premises, and more closing down.

LP03: [Walking past entry to carpark 9 Yarra St] So there's... it's not working, it's not ... yeah, right... I mean even with carpark should be obligatory to have an architect design the front entry so that it's attractive. Even carpark, because they are such eyesores. Their signage is boring... and that's ok, but there should be some things that make it more interesting.... And I love the colour black, as you know, but maybe black isn't the best colour all the time, just painted black...maybe it could be clad differently, or ...I don't know...But it certainly feels nicer out here, just because of the sun... getting some light.

LP03: [Walking past 10 Yarra St with for-lease signage] Is this first time renting?

CM: *No, it was a gym and it's just moved down the road.*

LP03: Oh yeah... 'we've moved', ok.

LP03: It would be nice to see a diversity of retail too...so that it does draw a more diverse demographic. So what kind of combination? There's the obvious men's and women's clothing and stuff like that...

CM: *[Outside SXY, 12 Yarra St] this is a real estate agent's office.*

LP03: So SXY...yeah... it's ok as an entry. **[Image 11]** But I have this... this is yuck... we've got... it's great to have lots of glazing but the minute you start putting desks up against, back end of computers, and filing boxes, and reflex paper and you know, all of that... again, it does nothing for the streetscape. That's why, cafes just bring life to places, don't they? [indicating to discarded furniture on footpath outside frontage] And this should never be allowed!

LP03: [Indicating services conduits outside 14-16 Yarra St]. That's a bit ugly...I don't know, it's an old building... isn't it? I suppose it's plumbing that happened a while ago.

LP03: [Indicating empty tiered planters on frontage of 14-16 Yarra St] Well, this looks promising...I think it needs some dirt rather than pebbles though... this needs some serious landscaping. Quick... get Paul Bangay on the line, or someone! This is terrible, wow! So, this is Jeans West... is it wholesale?

CM: *I think it's their offices...*

LP03: Well, there's really not much going on down here is there? So, these ones have permits and are going to go?

CM: *[Indicting 17 Yarra St] this one definitely has a permit.*

LP03: Ok... that was an interesting little building in its day... 60s?

CM: *Yes I think so.*

LP03: Maybe late 50s.

LP03: [Outside Yarra House, 18 Yarra St] And, do I like this? I'm going to stand back and have a look at ... get the full effect. Yarra House... so what's this? it's all just apartments. It looks like there's a little shop down there? No, it's just sort of a waiting area.

CM: *Yes, it's the lobby.*

LP03: Yeah... I like this canopy, I think.... It's kind of bulky. Yeah, I think I like it...

CM: *What do you like about it?*

LP03: I think the timber works well, adding a little bit of curve is nice, and I like it in contrast to the next level up which is white mosaic tiles [looking up to screen wall in front of carpark levels]. But then I don't like the rest of the building. So, I think these first 2 designs look good.

LP03: [Looking towards carpark entry] And is that a lift?

CM: *It's the carpark entry. The doors slide back sideways.*

LP03: Oh, that's interesting, I like that... a bit 'Get Smart'-ish. Yes, I like that. Who did this?

CM: *Bird de la Couer.*

LP03: Ok... [looking through window into seating area in lobby] ...oh yeah...

LP03: [Looking at services cupboard]...again, they need Clare McAllister designing the covering on the services!

CM: *[19 Yarra St] This building's probably going to stay because the developer who did the development next door is doing another one out the back and he bought the air rights so his views can never be blocked out, so this can never be higher.*

LP03: Ok... but it could have a face lift or something

CM: *Yes, or be replaced with a new, same height building.*

LP03: OK, well again this end... is really... it feels like this building is coming out much further, there are some buildings set back?

CM: *Yes, any new buildings in this street, they have a restriction where they have to set the buildings back to make the footpath wider.*

LP03: I think that's great. So that's not going to happen with this building is it? [Man walks past with no shirt] So, you get all kinds of life down here! [laughs].

LP03: [Looking through portholes] Is that carpark down here? Yes, it is, ok.

Top end of Claremont St (west to east)

LP03: Well... I imagine the apartments around here are attracting....woo, we've got some Mondrian happening here! [indicating exposed side wall of 47 Claremont St at rear of vacant lot]... well, this lot here's definitely going to get built on and ... then how much of Mondrian are we going to block?

CM: *All of it, it will all be gone.*

LP03: Wow... so that's useless.

CM: *It's temporary I guess... they would have known.*

LP03: Yeah... they would have known. But at least someone tried to do something different. It's kind of obvious, we've see this over and over, but it's nice to see someone trying to do something a bit different.

LP03: [outside vacant site 55 Claremont St] I'd like to hope that this end here...whatever's going to happen, because this will go too, eventually, won't it... because we've got an open park on the other side, I hope we do something really quality and nice to make a difference, and for people to enjoy. And it's facing north, so if the developers and architects don't make use of that, they're crazy. You know if this is going to be the back end with all the services blow out, that's just terrible.

Claremont St (heading south)

LP03: [Looking towards mosaic wall at base of 56 Claremont St] We've got some daisies over there!

CM: *This little building is an office building, it has a physio...*

LP03: **[Image 12]** It's actually a nice little building... I don't mind it, that's not offensive ... the daisies, a bit twee, but I think the tone of the yellow is a good yellow, a very acid yellow, and I think the building's quite simple. I do like the protruding balconies, and I can see [indicating through the clear windows to the stair well] inside there you've got the levels painted in the yellow... one, two and three. So, I quite like that. And they've highlighted the fire, the water, fire hydrant thing... so, it's understated but they're still trying to do something a little bit interesting. It would have been nice to maybe see the windows here on the corner... perhaps, maybe little balconies... oh, no, they've got balconies here, don't they... but this is where the north sun is... so balconies or big windows to open... I don't know, or even balconies that come out. But maybe they couldn't get a permit, it's next to Melbourne High School.

LP03: So, in terms of the general area, I don't see myself wanting to live anywhere like this, at the moment. It's a bit congested, it doesn't feel that inviting. I imagine it you lived here, it would just be for convenience maybe, to work... I don't know, with all the choices in Melbourne, it just doesn't... but it's probably not my demographic either. There's probably lots of younger millennials who would be buying in to these areas because South Yarra, Prahran are some of the action spots. You're on a train line so the infrastructure's all here, but it feels transient... lots of short termers, airbnbs. So, if you were an interstate or international traveller and you just wanted to be 'in the thick of it', it's convenient!

CM: *There are at least four hotels in this precinct.*

LP03: Oh, perfect....but you're not meaning pubs are you?[laughs].

CM: *There are two new buildings going up on the sites over there [indicating 39-40 and 42-48 Claremont St]*

LP03: Look, I think that will be great... anything to obscure the horrible purple thing over the other side, that was a tragedy wasn't it. [indicating rear of the building at 657 Chapel St]. How on earth does something like that...? So that'll be good. Who's doing these ones do you know?

CM: *This one's Plus Architecture, I think. Rothe Lowman's doing this one and they have quite an interesting way of dealing with the flood levels. There's a flood plain here, which is why there are lots of steps up to the front doors, but they have...*

LP03: Yeah but when was the last flood. I mean, just the way we're drying up in this country, the rainfall keeps decreasing.

CM: *Good point... because it does impact on the streetscape.*

LP03: [Outside 47 Claremont St] Yeah, more of these services. There must be better ways. Must be.

CMc: *Did you notice, on the other side of the street down there [indicating to 50-54 Claremont St] they kept them low and put a planter box on top.*

LP03: Smart! No... see I didn't notice it because it's been obscured by theI'm sure the fireys would know what to look for, they'd go straight to there, I mean it's labelled, it has to be labelled. Great, fantastic.

LP03: It's so blowy down here. [Looking at steps up to entry 33 Claremont St] That's not very wheelchair friendly, is it? What if somebody wants to ... they can't go in here. Wow, how did that get passed?

CM: *You were allowed to when these were built. It might have changed now. Then you had to for commercial, but not residential.*

LP03: [Looking across at 24 Claremont St] Interesting.

CM: *That's another gym... there are about four gyms in this precinct.*

LP03: Well they've got a captive audience haven't they, all the young people staying here. Amity Apartment Hotel... they need to get a new graphic designer, really!

CM: *they have lift access up the entry on the side here.*

LP03: Oh yeah... well, you wouldn't know, you'd have to be told, there probably needs to be discreet sign to say lift access.

CM: *[Looking across the construction site at 22 Yarra St to the skyline beyond] That's the Capitol Building you can see across there, on the corner of Toorak Rd and Chapel St. It's going to be the tallest building outside the CBD – 50 storeys.*

LP03: Wow... it's probably going to become very New York, but with not all the buildings being charming or attractive. I think a lot of the buildings are just plain old ugly... dull and boring, standard, with minimum of effort...

LP03: [Looking down at footpath outside 25 Claremont St] Gee this is a bit bad, isn't it? There's a fantastic app now that I've just loaded on my phone... it's called Snap, Send, Solved. [Having to talk loudly over construction noise] So, if you see graffiti somewhere, rubbish, a street tree that's not... you take a photograph and send it on and they'll come and fix it. [Looking at rubbish beside the bin] Well that was a poor miss wasn't it ... right beside a bin, couldn't get it in!

CM: *Any last comments you want to make before we finish up?*

LP03: Well, I think I kind of said it... its lacking. There's little glimpses... we've got some of our top architects doing buildings here and I suppose what they're doing on the street-level is going to enhance and improve the place but... it sort of went a bit wrong didn't it. [Looking at columns outside Moose Cafe in Yarra Ln] I mean even those columns ... details like those columns. They are as dull as... if you are going to have concrete round columns that are not Corinthian, Ionic or Doric [laughs]... paint it, mosaic, do something... clad it in brass! But painted grey concrete... in fact- why paint it, should have left it as concrete, just plain concrete. Speaking of which, I do like that signage, the inverted Yarra Ln, I think that's really nice, and that's quite nice too... with the 15. It's quite nice. Yeah... little glimpses, but it's got a long way to go. The wind, the dark and lack of light on the ground level....

CM: *Thankyou very much!*